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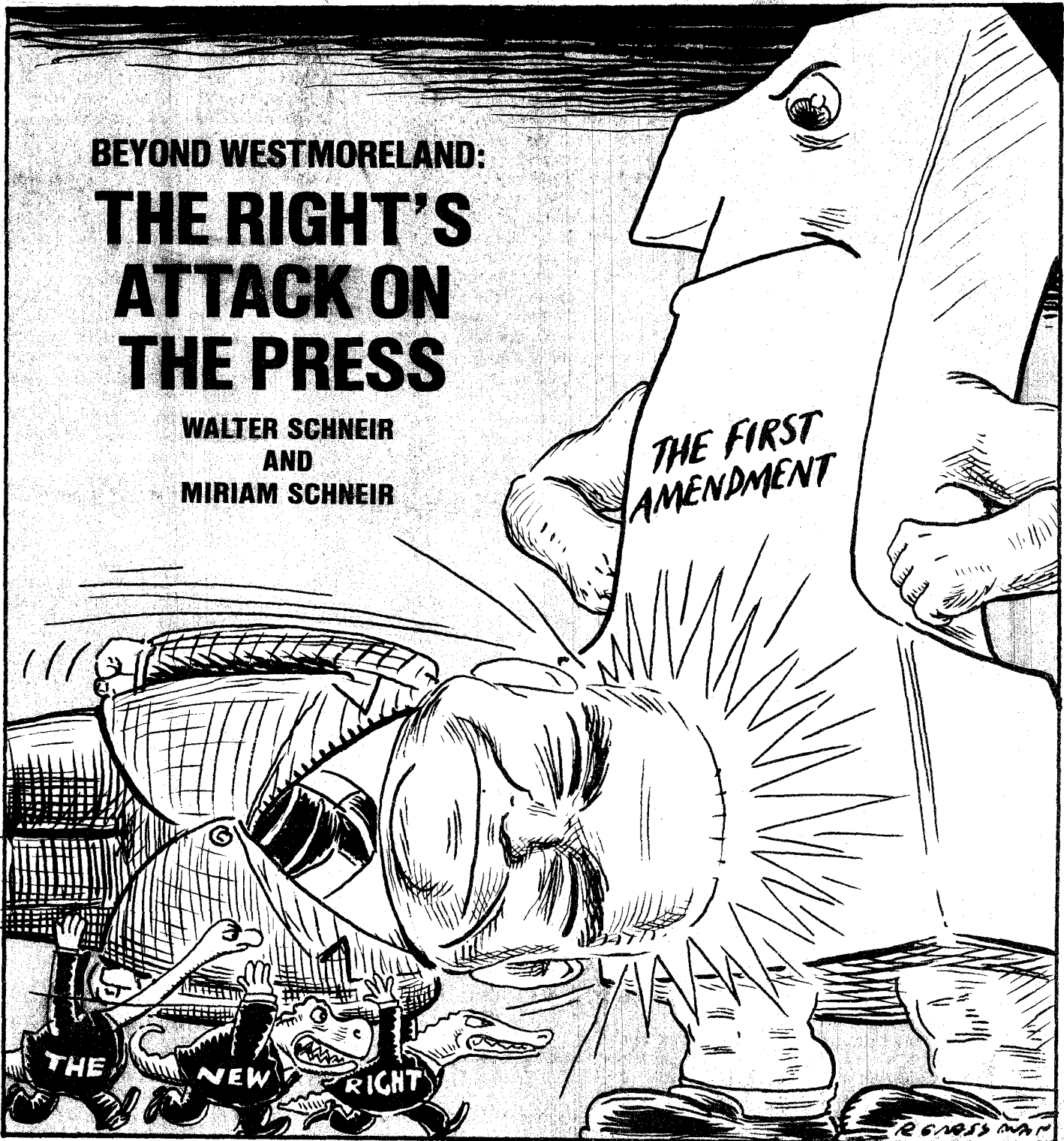
March 30, 1985 \$1.25; U.K. 6

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BEYOND WESTMORELAND:
**THE RIGHT'S
ATTACK ON
THE PRESS**

WALTER SCHNEIR
AND
MIRIAM SCHNEIR

THE FIRST
AMENDMENT



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LETTERS.

MIND YOUR CORDOBAS

New York City

I know the thoughts of an ultraconservative rarely appear in your pages, but I am compelled to comment on a clearly unintentionally damning (of the Sandinista experiment) fact that appeared in your magazine ["Bringing the War Home in Nicaragua," Feb. 9]. Zachary Sklar quotes several *campesinos* who, he claims, "were proud of what they achieved since the revolution and were ready to defend it."

What exactly had they achieved? "Under Somoza. . . we worked from dawn till dusk every day, no vacations, for 6 cordobas a day [about 60 cents at the 1978 exchange rate]." And now? According to your man Zachary: "Last spring, base pay was raised to 42 cordobas a day (about \$1.50 at the present exchange rate)."

Now even though Zach doesn't understand anything about true purchasing power, at least one of your editors could have reminded him that black market currency exchange rates are the only true indication of what a currency is worth. What is dictated by Managua bureaucrats has nothing to do with the purchasing power of a *campesino's* collection of cordobas. This is indicated by the desperation with which black marketeers try to buy dollars just inside the Nicaraguan border (in the south as well as the north).

The current black market rate for cordobas is about 400 to one. In other words, the real salary of workers (if we rely on Zach's impeccable reporting abilities) has dropped from around 60 cents a day to 10 cents a day. In Zach's boyish zeal to report official pronouncements as obediently as one of Father d'Escoto's altar boys, he has given the world graphic evidence of exactly how cruel the Sandinista revolution has been to Nicaragua's poor.

Thank you, Zach. And thank you, *Nation*, for information I promise to report as accurately as it was presented to your readers.

David Asman
The Wall Street Journal

SKLAR REPLIES

New York City

I am indeed naïve. I can't seem to get it through my head that *Wall Street Journal* editors in comfortable offices in New York City know more about "how cruel the Sandinista revolution has been to Nicaragua's poor" than Nicaragua's poor themselves.

Actually, Dave is right that official exchange rates are irrelevant in measuring "true purchasing power." But at San José and La Lima, where I was reporting, black market exchange rates are just as irrelevant. The *campesinos* are paid in cordobas, buy goods in cordobas, do not exchange their currency for dollars and cannot begin to af-

ford the imported consumer items that black market dollars can buy in Managua.

At poor, isolated, war-torn farms like these, the most meaningful measure of purchasing power is now people actually live. As the *campesinos* of San José told me and would gladly tell Dave, the quality of their life has improved dramatically since the 1979 revolution. Before, there was widespread malnutrition; today, there is none. Before, every *campesino* on the farm was illiterate; today, all but five, who chose not to learn, have been taught for free to read and write. Before, children died of easily preventable diseases like polio, diphtheria and diarrhea, and those on the farm had no access to medical care; today, those diseases have been wiped out by government immunization and sanitation campaigns, and free medical care and medicine are available at all times. Before, a *campesino* could be shot for complaining about the appalling working conditions—twelve-hour days, no vacations, unequal pay for women and no pay for children; today, the *campesinos* have a union whose protests have won for them an eight-hour day, four weeks of paid vacation a year, equal pay for men, women and children, retirement at full pay for the elderly, three months paid maternity leave and incentive pay for high production.

It's no great secret that if these "social wages" are not considered, then "real wages"—the amount earned measured in relation to inflation—have gone down in Nicaragua since the revolution. According to the U.N. Economic Commission on Latin America, real wages of agricultural workers declined 18.6 percent in 1983, the last year for which figures have been compiled. That statistic simply confirms what is obvious to everyone in Nicaragua: the country's economy is in deep trouble. In blaming the Sandinista government for that trouble, however, Dave seems to have missed my point, which was that many of the current economic problems are a direct result of the *contra* war, and the relentless economic pressure from the U.S. government.

If he was genuinely concerned about Nicaragua's poor, Dave would stop writing letters to *The Nation*, quibbling about abstract concepts like "true purchasing power" and would write a letter to Ronald Reagan telling him to stop spending our tax dollars to support mercenaries who have murdered, raped, tortured and kidnapped thousands of Nicaragua's poor in the past three years.

Zachary Sklar

'PORTRAIT' A PLEASURE

New York City

April Bernard's highhanded and patronizing review of Elizabeth Frank's *Louise Bogan: A Portrait* does a disservice to a wonderful book ["Arresting, Not Arrested," Feb. 23].

Bernard is entitled to reject Frank's analyses of Bogan's poems, although I must say I found them scrupulous and helpful. But at least she should cite a few. Are Frank's well-informed and psychologically astute discussions of lyric poetry by women, and of Bogan's lifelong conflict over being a woman and a poet, what Bernard means by "tediously detailed correspondences" between the life and the art? If so, it would have been interesting to hear Bernard's own thoughts about the poems—beyond ringing declarations of her love for them and glossy phrases like "well-tailored chic."

Similarly, Bernard is entitled to find Bogan's prose "labored and often boring," despite the fact that the letters are widely admired for their humor, vividness, character and clarity of style. But it's a bit thick to condole with the biographer for her "unavoidable reliance on letters, diaries and memoirs," as though the intimate writings of her subject were some unfortunate dreary burden. You might as well sympathize with a novelist for having to make things up!

Frank's biography is so obviously a labor of love, so obviously *not* marked by "woolly lack of purpose," "condescension" or "contempt," that one hardly knows how to respond to the charges except to deny them outright. Admirers of Bogan's poetry—a far larger crowd than Bernard seems to realize—will find *Louise Bogan: A Portrait* a sympathetic, generous and elegantly written account of both her life and her art.

Katha Pollitt

BERNARD REPLIES

New York City

I should not like the occasion of Pollitt's letter to make me harsher on Frank. That a small review of a biography should be deemed an appropriate vehicle for a comprehensive critical monograph on the subject's life and art I find amusingly disingenuous. As to Pollitt's defense of Bogan's prose style in the letters and memoirs—well, when anything is "widely admired," it is my belief that the antennae of discrimination should be raised all the higher.

Simply put, we disagree. April Bernard

CORRECTION

In Irene Gendzier's March 2 article, "Is Hussein's Peace Plan Doomed?" the author erroneously stated that Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy gave an interview in Kuwait. The interview was, as reported, with a Kuwaiti newspaper.

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Lords of the Air

“We have seen the news,” Peter Jennings began his broadcast of last Monday’s *ABC World News Tonight*, “and it is us.” Nothing excites the media more than its own adventures, the stories of its triumphs and defeats, the continuing saga of ratings, mergers and obituaries. But the sale of Jennings’s employer to Capital Cities Communications is a bigger story than he and his fellow talking heads would elucidate that night. They fretted about the integrity of their news departments, the stability of sitcoms and soaps and, of course, the security of their jobs. But what is

more worrisome is the increasing—and probably irreversible—concentration of communications power in a few hands, the rapid industrialization of the media industry and the elimination of social space and economic opportunity for cultural alternatives.

By themselves, Capital Cities and ABC were towering giants. Together, they will (if stockholders and the F.C.C. approve the merger) make a new leviathan of print, film, radio, video, records, electronics and finance. Capital Cities owns seven commercial TV stations, twelve radio stations, fifty-four cable stations, ten daily newspapers and more than seventy other papers and periodicals, from *Women’s Wear Daily* to *Institutional Investor*. ABC is more than *Dynasty* and *Night Night*. It is heavily involved in publishing

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and cable and is marketing software for twenty-first-century communications systems.

The point of the merger is not necessarily to force competitors out of business but to control the terms by which limited competition is conducted, to pre-empt new fields of endeavor, to command material resources, manpower and money on a global scale, and to manipulate mass culture so that the audience will respond to the needs of the corporate network rather than the other way around. If that sounds like the introduction to *Star Trek*—"To boldly go where no man has gone before"—the allusion is appropriate. The captains of the new communications corporations are poised to break free of the constraints on the media trade and to soar to an unprecedented level of enterprise.

At the same time that the pioneers of profit are seeking new worlds to conquer, the guardians of the public interest are planning a retreat. Public television outlets in some of the nation's biggest markets are considering exchanging their VHF signal—a place on the dial from Channel 2 to 13—for one on the UHF band, from 14 through 83. Because the high-numbered spots are weaker than the low ones, public-TV viewers without access to cable would be cut off.

The quid pro quo for the swap would be a chunk of cash. Commercial stations that got stuck with a UHF channel are eager to expand their sales to the VHF audience. John Jay Iselin, president of New York City's WNET, is studying the feasibility of moving from Channel 13 to a nice quiet place on the UHF band, in exchange for an estimated \$200 million. He says he would use the money, or at least the interest that would accrue if the lump sum were invested, "to finance original programming."

Don't hold your breath. Public television is poor, but poverty is not its main problem. With few exceptions it is elitist, unimaginative and timid. It is shamefully obedient to the demands perceived to be implicit in the grants it gets from big corporate and institutional underwriters.

WNET, in particular, spends money wastefully and foolishly. Iselin's salary is bigger than that of Mayor Koch, not to mention that of the president of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the national funding arm of PBS. NET's idea of original programming is to buy a British series on wildlife, stick on a list of credits with New York names, pay the local staff handsomely and send a crew and a host to Grand Teton or Big Sur to shoot a thirty-second introduction with extravagant production values.

Public television had feared that the Reagan Administration's social austerity plans would extinguish the flame of high culture flickering on the tube that features *Masterpiece Theater* and *Wall Street Week*. No such luck. President Reagan has thoroughly infiltrated the Corporation for Public Broadcasting with right-wing ideologues and Republican campaign workers, and the money is starting to flow again. So last week's events presage a downbeat ending: a weak and conservative public television system kept alive by Big Oil and the New Right, hiding in the far reaches of a media dominated by CCC-ABC. Is there any help on the way? Jesse Helms is looking better with each episode.

A Costly Chip

Before the Senate voted last week to authorize spending \$1.5 billion for twenty-one MX missiles, Gary Hart expressed his disapproval in a televised interview. New weapons systems used to be called bargaining chips for arms control talks, Hart remarked; now the talks are chips for the weapons.

President Reagan's commitment to a massive arms build-up is infinitely stronger than his desire for arms control. To get money for weapons from Congress and to win approval for their deployment from his NATO allies Reagan is not above promising a round or two of negotiations.

What's there to lose? Reagan gets his guns—from the U.S. Senate and the Belgian Parliament in the same week—and plays the peacemaker too. When the talks break down, or peter out with an inconclusive communiqué, he will blame the Russians. How dogmatic of them, and how predictable, to shrink from signing a treaty that puts them at a distinct disadvantage, with an MX at their heads and a Star Wars system shining in their eyes!

Two years ago the Senate voted for twenty-one MXs. Now we are to get that many more. Each is MIRVed with ten warheads. In today's market, where firepower is measured by the millenniums of nuclear winter it will produce, that may not seem like much. But for Reagan, too much ain't enough.

Unequal Speech

If freedom of the press is reserved to those who own one, in A.J. Liebling's famous phrase, then freedom of speech, by a recent Supreme Court decision, is reserved to those who can afford it. A seven-member Court majority declared unconstitutional the provision of the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act that had barred political action committees from contributing more than \$1,000 to a candidate—on the ground that a restriction on spending is a curb of free speech. Following that logic, speech and cash are identical, and expression is just another commodity to be accumulated or exchanged. In the marketplace of profits, rather than ideas, only "money talks," as Justice Byron White charged in his angry dissent.

PAC spending is wildly disproportionate to party power at the voter level. In 1984, PACs spent \$15.3 million for Reagan and \$621,000 for Mondale. That gross inequality reflects the disparity between the resources of the corporate right and those of the working and welfare left. One side can afford free speech; the other is at a loss for words. Legislated limits cannot redress that imbalance in the absence of across-the-board public financing of campaigns and a redistribution of power throughout the system. But to remove what small strictures there are against excessive spending for candidates is to destroy the

democratic pluralism the First Amendment was intended to preserve.

House of Cards

The firestorm that swept through Ohio's banking system last week was ignited by the Administration's deregulation policies in the financial services area. They produced a go-go atmosphere that encouraged E.S.M. Government Securities, a Florida investment firm, to engage in high-stakes gambling; they encouraged Marvin Warner, the principal stockholder of Home State Savings Bank of Cincinnati, Ohio's largest state-chartered thrift institution, to stake his bank on E.S.M.'s speculation; and they insured that Federal banking officials would not try too hard to find out what was going on.

Banks and other financial institutions facilitate the circulation of money for exchange, consumption and investment, but they are also profit-seeking businesses. Deregulation creates an explosive contradiction between those two functions. When financial institutions take risks, make mistakes or try to cut corners they endanger the entire economy. *Business Week* recently reported that Continental Illinois's collapse last spring and the Federal Reserve's rescue mission were largely responsible for the sudden slump in the second half of 1984.

It's entirely possible that the misadventure of some other financial institution will bring down the house of cards. The failure of austerity measures to ease foreign debt problems in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico heads a long list of candidates to trigger the next crisis. The regulated banking system that brought this country forty years of economic stability should be restored—and fast.

The Greeks Choose

In 1963, the Greek socialist member of Parliament Grigoris Lambrakis was murdered at a political rally in Salonika. The killing exposed the existence in Greece of a parastate, consisting of the palace, the American Embassy, certain elements of the police and the army general staff. It acted as a curtain raiser for the 1967 military coup, when the parastate decided to rule without the pretense of democracy. And it gave Costa-Gavras the subject for his film *Z*.

In 1963, Konstantinos Karamanlis was the conservative Prime Minister. His reaction to the murder of Lambrakis was to exclaim in outrage, "In God's name—who rules Greece?" Now, that question is being answered in ways the State Department and the Pentagon do not like. By refusing to grant Karamanlis the expected sinecure of an unopposed second term as President, the leaders of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) have challenged the automatically pro-American and pro-NATO consensus that holds

power in Greece no matter who wins elections. And by nominating Christos Sartzetakis for President, they have demonstrated a certain talent for the ironic stroke. It was Sartzetakis, now a Supreme Court Justice, who led the investigation into the murder of Lambrakis and who was not afraid to expose the high-level protection the killers enjoyed.

Hubris and nemesis—the Greek establishment no longer owns the country as it once did. The Greek vote in international meetings is no longer a servile ditto to the wishes of the United States. Greek soil is no longer an automatic host for American bases, Greek harbors no longer hang bunting for the American fleet. Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou does not regard cozy relations with Washington as the proof of his statesmanship.

The Reagan Administration, which vilifies the elected government of Greece in public and in private, refuses to take steps to counter Greece's "anti-Americanism." It will not stop the grotesque overarmament of the Turkish military junta which makes exorbitant claims on Greek islands and airspace. It will not end its indulgence of Turkey's occupation and colonization of Cyprus. It will not respect Greece's need to pursue an independent foreign policy in the Balkans and the Middle East.

As for Karamanlis, it is time Greece outgrew its dependence on one politician. Those who mourn his retirement should be careful that they do not confuse democracy with continuity. And those who do not want Greece for an enemy should drop their lavish backing of the enemy of Greece—an enemy that has dispensed with democracy altogether.

Belated Oscars

Now that Carl Foreman and Michael Wilson, the blacklisted writers responsible for the screenplay of *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, are dead, the powers that be saw fit to present posthumous Oscars to their widows in a prelude to this year's Academy Award ceremony.

The movie won seven Oscars in 1958, including best picture. But the man credited with the screenplay—the front—was Pierre Boulle, who had written the novel on which the film was based. Boulle, a Frenchman, diplomatically chose not to attend the Oscar ceremonies that year—a good idea, since he could neither read nor write English.

Foreman and Wilson are merely the latest victims of the cold war witch hunt to be rehabilitated. For example, professors in New York and California who were Red-baited from their posts during the 1950s have recently received official apologies from their former employers. Thus the cycle of repression and repentance, documented in the writings of Frank Donner, among others, repeats itself.

It is dangerous to draw easy morals from these matters. One thing is clear: society cannot purge its collective guilt merely by rehabilitating two dead men. Better that it absorbs history's lesson and never does it again.

DISPATCHES.

■ CHINA: Arms and the Israelis

Once a strong supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Beijing has become a major customer for Israel's largely government-owned arms industry. Reportedly, there are 200 Israeli military advisers in China. The opening to Tel Aviv began in 1981, when a "nongovernmental" trade delegation from Israel visited China. The successes the Israeli Defense Forces scored against Soviet-supplied Syria in the 1982 invasion of Lebanon further impressed the Chinese, and rumors of deals proliferated.

Last November, the stories received some confirmation in the British journal *Jane's Defence Weekly*, which reported that total Chinese arms orders from Israel could reach \$3 billion. Several Israeli-style weapons were unveiled in the January parade celebrating the thirty-sixth anniversary of the Chinese Revolution, adding more credence to the reports.

Although the \$3 billion figure seems high (given that Israel's total arms sales last year were \$4 billion), any commerce of this kind between the two countries would have major foreign policy implications, particularly for the balance of power between China and the Soviet Union. Both the Chinese and the Israeli Embassies in Washington deny that any arms sales have taken place. Figures are hard to come by, but it is believed that Israeli weapons shipments are "laundered" through Hong Kong. (Israeli military advisers reportedly enter China via the same route.) And according to Israeli government statistics, Israel has accumulated a significant trade surplus with the crown colony. For Israel the sales provide badly needed hard currency; also, the Chinese have bartered some rare metals which are used in the production of advanced aircraft like the Lavie fighter manufactured by Israel.

China is said to be purchasing mainly missiles, sensors, radar equipment and possibly the decoy drones that proved so effective in taking out Syria's SAM missile sites. The Israeli version of the British L7 antitank gun is also reportedly part of the billion-dollar package. This gun knocked out Syria's advanced Soviet T-72 tanks during the 1982 fighting in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

What does Washington think of the Tel Aviv-Beijing connection? Since such arrangements come under the purview of Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle, who is strongly anti-Soviet and pro-Israel, no objections have been raised. Even so, some Pentagon recalitrants are reportedly disturbed by the thought that Israeli technology, much of it of U.S. origin, is being supplied even to "good" Communists.

■ WASHINGTON: The 'Arabist' View

Now that "moderate" Arab leaders are trooping to Washington to promote a new Middle East peace effort, the voices of the State Department's so-called Arabists are being heard again. The term refers to career officers who, having specialized in the region, generally favor a Palestinian state. Their unexpurgated views are rarely a matter of

public record, but we present a sample. "Dispatches" has obtained a memorandum written by Henry S. Sizer, who has served at diplomatic posts in Yemen, Tunisia and Oman, among others. Although his report was written in 1978, it exemplifies Arabist thinking, which, like the Palestine problem, hasn't changed all that much over the years. Sizer wrote:

One has to concede that the most active Palestinian leaders are unlovely people who don't deserve to be acknowledged cordially.

...

A moderate Arab diplomat with whom I occasionally discuss the Arab-Israeli dispute compares the PLO's commitment to destroy Israel to a child threatening an adult. The Israeli reaction is as if the adult responded stuffily to the child: "Well, I certainly won't deal with you." Israel makes quite an issue of this, my colleague adds, although it used to say it would negotiate with the Arabs any time.

...

Either the Israelis relax their policy or the peace moves will fail with disastrous consequences—it's about as simple as that. While as a practical matter some gesture from the Palestinians may be necessary to sweeten this pill for [Menachem] Begin, I believe the basic change of position must be his.

...

A formal abandonment of the PLO ideology is not in the cards except as part of the ultimate settlement.

...

Just as the Zionist movement in the international context of the first half of the twentieth century led irresistibly to an independent Israeli state, the logic of the second half of the century dictates that there *will* be an independent Palestine.

...

The only question is whether they'll get it [statehood] *with* our concurrence and therefore a degree of protection for our interests or *without* it and an accentuation of their congenital "anti-imperialism."

■ ICELAND: U.S. Nuclear Contingencies

Although Iceland is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a defense treaty it entered with the United States in 1951 specifies that its government must approve any deployment of American nuclear weapons on its territory. Imagine Prime Minister Steingrímur Hermannsson's distress when nuclear weapons expert William Arkin of the Institute for Policy Studies told him last year that U.S. contingency plans call for the deployment of forty-eight nuclear depth charges in Iceland, without prior consultation. (The United States has some 900 B-57 nuclear antisubmarine bombs, each with an explosive yield of about 10 kilotons.) In an official statement Foreign Minister Geir Hallgrímsson charged that even a contingency plan to deploy nuclear weapons violates the 1951 treaty.

What Icelandic officials might not know is that this is not the first unilateral U.S. plan for that country's security. In

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

1949, the National Security Council secretly decided that the United States would invade Iceland "in the event of emergency." According to an N.S.C. document dated July 29, 1949, such an "emergency" was defined as "an internal communist *coup d'état*," whether backed by Moscow or not.

The document spells out how the United States would intervene, adding:

However, the despatch of military forces to Iceland would not be the only conceivable way of dealing with this situation. Another means would be to put in hand an intensive political warfare program, including the infiltration of arms and underground leaders (preferably Scandinavian) to assist non-communist Icelanders in opposing the communist regime. This would have the particular advantage that even if the non-communist elements were not immediately successful, the continuation of armed struggle on the island would afford the best pretext for entry of foreign forces.

The document shows that N.S.C. officials were ordered not to discuss the plan with Icelandic authorities because to do so would cause "considerable needless harm at the present."

Contingency plans may change, but the arrogance of American planners does not.

■ HISTORIANS' FOOTNOTE: Nixon Archives

More than ten years have passed since the Watergate scandal occurred, yet nothing that could be considered scholarly has been written about the greatest Presidential crisis of the century. When Congress passed the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act in 1974, it directed the National Archives to open the most sensitive papers of the Nixon Presidency at the earliest reasonable date, to "provide the public with the 'full truth' of the abuses of governmental power popularly identified under the generic term Watergate."

But through various tactics Richard Nixon, assisted by twenty-nine erstwhile aides, has been able to thwart Congress's desire to make the facts available to historians. Last winter, the aides brought a lawsuit to challenge regulations the archives had drawn up governing access to the papers. Of the estimated 40 million pages of Nixon papers, 1.5 million were called sensitive by the Nixon staff, and those documents are at the center of the tug of war between the former President and the National Archives. The two sides are negotiating an agreement on access to the documents. Nixon has approached those negotiations as if they were arms talks with the Russians—but it is not the author of détente who is talking, rather the cold-warrior of the 1950s.

Last year, during the groundbreaking ceremony for the Presidential library being built on thirteen acres of prime coastline in San Clemente, California, Nixon told reporters that unless the restrictions that he has specified are enforced, the private foundation that is building the library would make copies of the files and deposit them in the Nixon library. Thus the foundation would own the copies and could strictly regulate their availability. Meanwhile, the

originals would remain in the National Archives, and researchers' access to those documents would be encumbered by legal and financial restrictions. As a result, Nixon could exercise total control over the unflattering truths about his Presidency—those not already known, that is.

■ BRITAIN: MI5 Wiretaps Revealed

Censorship is alive and thriving in Britain, as indicated by the recent cover-up of news about illegal wiretapping conducted by MI5, the U.K.'s domestic intelligence agency. Last month, the television program *20/20 Vision* scheduled a documentary showing that MI5 had wiretapped the telephones of prominent politicians, labor leaders, antinuclear activists and journalists. Shortly before the broadcast, the Independent Broadcasting Authority told the producers that the film violated the Official Secrets Act and could not be aired.

The producers promptly showed the film in London cinemas and held private screenings for interested members of Parliament. After *The Guardian* published portions of the script, the film was finally broadcast, and the government was forced to order a limited investigation. But Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher confined the inquiry to wiretaps authorized by the Home Secretary.

The allegations rest on the sworn affidavits of two former employees of MI5: an unnamed clerk and Catherine Massiter, who, as an intelligence officer, had been in charge of monitoring the activities of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (C.N.D.), the major British peace organization. Massiter and the clerk charge that dozens of phones were tapped at the request of Cabinet officials. Among the victims were Patricia Hewitt, then the general secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties (N.C.C.L.) and now an adviser to Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock; Duncan Campbell, an investigative journalist with the *New Statesman*; Arthur Scargill, leader of the coal miners' union; and officials of the N.C.C.L. and Friends of the Earth.

Beginning in 1970, Massiter worked in MI5's Branch F, which handles wiretaps on potential subversives. She says that MI5 agents infiltrated C.N.D. and that MI5 files were opened on two of its leaders, Bruce Kent and Joan Ruddock.

"We are violating our own rules," Massiter says. "It seemed to be getting out of control. This was happening not because C.N.D. as such justified this kind of treatment, but simply because of political pressure: the heat was there for information about C.N.D. and we had to have it."

Before Massiter quit her job in protest and went to the press, she made her objections known to MI5 officials. Taking a leaf from their Soviet counterparts, they sent her to a psychiatrist and are trying to impugn her sanity. But in an interview with *The Guardian*, Tory Steven Norris, who is part of an ad hoc group of M.P.s who spent ninety minutes meeting with Massiter recently, said of her sanity: "She seemed a very sane, straightforward person. She was not extreme in her views either politically or ideologically."

MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Vancouver, British Columbia

In *Home Sweet Home: My Canadian Album*, his recent bittersweet memoir of the "friendly giants to the north," Mordecai Richler describes the farcical state of affairs that obtained between Washington and Ottawa in the 1950s and 1960s:

Our next memorable prime minister, old Johnny Diefenbaker, made an enormous fuss over his red NORAD emergency telephone, the hotline that connected his Ottawa outpost directly to the head office, the president of the U.S. Diefenbaker habitually kept his hotline in full view, hoping to bedazzle visitors. "I can get Ike any time," he would say.

Lester Pearson . . . not only removed the offending telephone from his desk, but concealed it so carelessly that when it rang one winter's morning in 1964, he couldn't find it. Paul Martin, then the minister of external affairs, was with the P.M. at the time.

"My God," Martin exclaimed, "do you realize this could mean war?"

"No," Pearson said. "They can't start a war if we don't answer it."

Finally the telephone was discovered behind a curtain, and the caller, who wanted to speak to "Charlie," turned out to have the wrong number.

Very funny, unless or until you think about it. But things have become markedly worse since the 1960s, and today Canada is in danger of losing control over its defenses and—since you cannot have both democracy and nuclear weapons systems—its internal affairs as well. The laughable "Shamrock Summit" just concluded between President Reagan and the empty vessel of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was replete with insincere compliments and bogus bonhomie. The stage management of the occasion only drew attention to the obvious: viz., Canadians are being drawn into the madness of Star Wars with even less debate and discussion than is being permitted the voters and taxpayers of the United States.

The initial agreement looked innocuous. It was made, as these things so often are, under the rubric of "modernization." The old Distant Early Warning, or DEW, Line is to be "upgraded" and renamed the North Warning System. It will consist of thirty-nine unmanned radar units, to be paid for on a 60:40 ratio by the United States and Canada. In return for its share in this \$1.7 billion program, Canada is promised a slice of the contractor's pie. Or rather, its contractors are. The government promises a high-tech and employment "trickle down" from this deal, which has yet to be debated properly in Parliament. But if there is no economic trickle down, there certainly will be other kinds. Starting with a string of stations in the northern wastes, the agreement thickens as it goes. A dozen landing strips for the forward deployment of U.S. F-15 interceptors. Eight U.S. Awacs planes on Canadian soil. Still ahead, the building of terminal defense positions, as part of the Strategic Defense Initiative network, to smash Soviet missiles on re-entry. On March 13, as Canadian Tories were denying that the new

bargain had any Star Wars components, the Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington said the opposite—a contradiction which led Pauline Jewett, external affairs spokeswoman for the opposition New Democratic Party, to call on the relevant ministers to resign.

They probably should have resigned several weeks earlier, for deceiving the people and the Parliament about the North American Air Defense (NORAD) agreement. This essentially colonial pact mortgages Canadian real estate to U.S. strategic designs. The recent ludicrous fuss between Leslie Gelb and George Shultz illustrates the situation admirably. Gelb was denounced for reporting the published conclusions of William Arkin and Richard Fieldhouse of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. Arkin and Fieldhouse had discovered, from the public record, that the United States would treat Canada as a political and military vassal in time of war. As hostilities developed, nuclear depth charges would be moved here, without the knowledge or consent of the "host."

This scheme is at least dignified by the urgency of war-time. But Arkin and Fieldhouse have unearthed another plan whereby the Strategic Air Command can move its bombers to Canadian territory even in time of "crisis." Because the nuclear weapons on board the U.S. planes will stay inside the aircraft, and thus technically will not be stored on the soil of another country, Presidential authorization for their movement is not required. Such are the inches of difference by which we live, and the half-truths with which we console ourselves.

Canada, which takes a hypocritical pride in its "nuclear free" reputation, is in fact lousy with nukes. Cruise missiles are tested over the Canadian Arctic. Alberta has been used as a proving ground for neutron bomb artillery shells. British Columbia is the test site for numerous antisubmarine devices including nuclear missiles. Seismic sensors, early-warning radars, strategic communications centers and the like are as common as steeples. And all this without the inconvenience of the consultation that would spell complicity. It's difficult to decide which half of this Janus is the most unattractive.

Canadian protesters, however, are breaking down the smug collusion that operates on both sides of the border. They are insisting on the right to be told the bad news before it breaks, and not to be shielded by their betters from policies they never sanctioned. This refreshing but still minor trend may owe something to Maj. Gen. Leonard Johnson, who retired last August as Commandant of the Canadian National Defense College. He stated that NATO's present operational plans leave no time for soldiers or politicians to ponder or negotiate. "Launch on warning" represents the final triumph of an irrational system over its designers. Or, as he put it, existing deployment represents "willful acquiescence to an irrational and suicidal act." Thanks to Mulroney's boyish eagerness to please, Canada is able to claim that it, too, plays a part in making the world a more dangerous place.

ARTICLES.

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The Right's Attack
On the Press

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The outcome of the Westmoreland trial is a gain for America—the America of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. But for the political movement that funded and supported it, the case is merely a lost battle. The New Right's war against the mass media continues unabated and that outcome is still in doubt.

In their quest for political power, the energetic and ambitious leaders of the New Right (many of whom now call themselves "conservative populists") regard the media as a formidable barrier. The problem, as they see it, is that the media is controlled by liberals, who are their natural enemies. The leaders' animus toward the media appears to be shared by their foot soldiers, the millions of "social conservatives" concentrated in the Sun Belt and the Midwest, who support a "pro-family" agenda and respond favorably to appeals for patriotism and a strong national defense.

Central to the thinking of the movement is the idea that the media is now the dominant force in America. Patrick Buchanan, the President's recently appointed Director of Communications, argued in 1977 that the main obstacle to the victory of conservative forces in this country was not the Democratic Party but the liberal media. Kevin Phillips, one of the right's most admired theorists, maintains that the old political parties have "lost their logic." He says, "Effective communications are replacing party organizations as the key to political success." It follows then that to take power—as opposed to winning an election—the right must capture the liberal media, lock, stock and barrel.

Phillips and other New Right social critics lean heavily on the theory of elites propounded by the early twentieth-century sociologists Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, who, not coincidentally—since elite theory counters the concept of class conflict—strongly influenced the young Mussolini and early Italian Fascism. New Right analysis, following another line trod by Italian Fascism, claims a unity of interest among "producers": business, labor and agriculture. "The basic economic and political split in America today," according to William A. Rusher, publisher of *National Review*, "is no longer between 'business and labor' but between 'producers and non-producers.'"

Among the nonproducers are the print and electronic media, part of a "verbalist" elite that battens on the hide of the hard-working producers. Rusher believes this unjust situation should not be permitted. So does Samuel T. Fran-

cis, a former policy analyst for the Heritage Foundation and now a legislative assistant to North Carolina Senator John East. He cites the media as one of those "power preserves of the entrenched elite whose values and interests are hostile to the traditional American ethos and which is a parasitical tumor on the body of Middle America. These structures should be leveled."

Although the New Right believes that the Presidency will continue to be held by conservatives, they see liberals clinging to control of the all-powerful media. In this situation, they sometimes regard the First Amendment as a weapon used by their enemies. How to convince people that the First Amendment is not sacrosanct? The New Right has already broached that touchy subject.

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Two years later in a book titled *Mediocracy*, Phillips pursued the argument:

The Bill of Rights is hardly a static legal concept. . . . perhaps the First Amendment may undergo a shifting interpretation . . . to reflect the new status of the communications industry. The media may be forced into the status of utilities regulated to provide access.

Phillips gave no specific details as to how the media was to be "regulated." But in 1981 some extraordinary suggestions were offered by James L. Tyson in *Target America: The Influence of Communist Propaganda on U.S. Media*. Tyson, who lists as his past affiliations the Office of Strategic Services (precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency), Time-Life International and I.B.M. World Trade Corporation, proposes that a government official be stationed at each of the three major television networks to check news stories for fairness and accuracy. The networks have "become so powerful in opinion formation that national survival demands some assurance that they will not be free to disseminate the misinformation and distortions that have occurred in recent years," he writes. "In a word, TV news has become much too important a matter to be left to TV newsmen."

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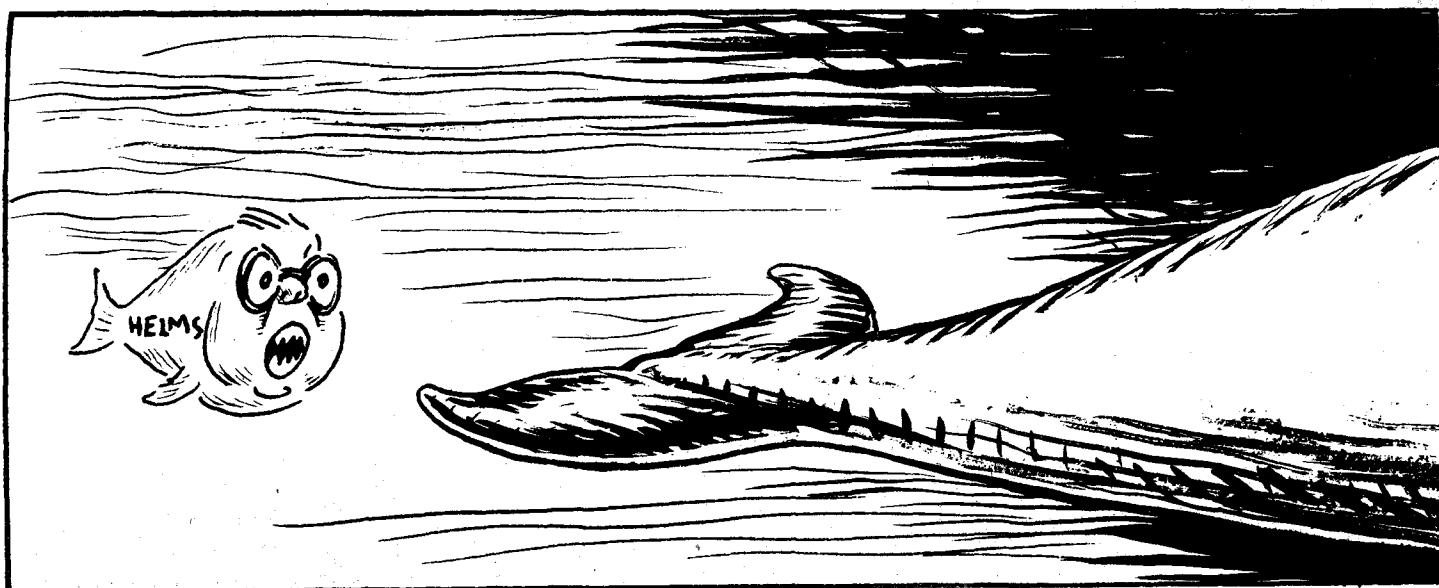
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Another current plan that would stifle debate on public issues should be mentioned. The Reagan Administration is attempting to stretch the draconian Espionage Act to cover leaks to the media by government employees. When a Navy Department employee sent photographs of a Soviet ship to a British publication, the Justice Department obtained an indictment for espionage against him, and this month that indictment was upheld by a Federal District Court judge in Baltimore. As if in tandem, a former high-level C.I.A. official, George Carver, has been calling publicly for legislation to permit the Espionage Act's use against Federal employees who disclose classified information to journalists. Carver, now with Georgetown University's right-wing Center for Strategic and International Studies, characterizes this suggested change as "fine tuning."

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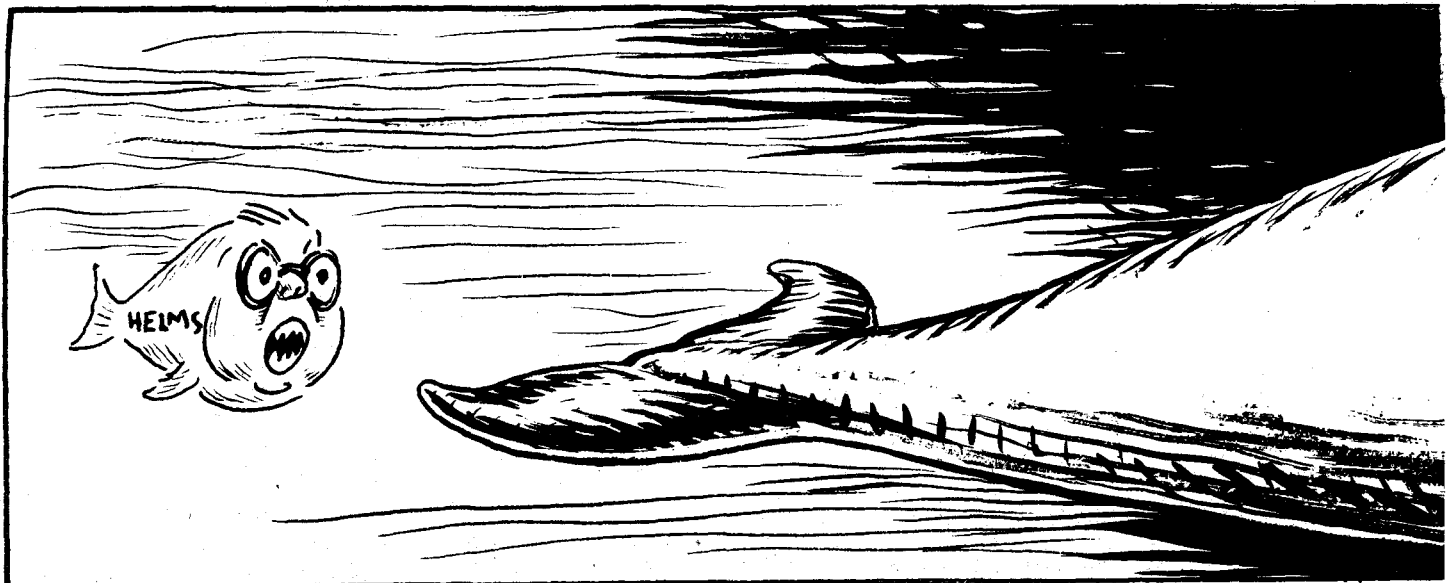
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First Amendment by some "regulatory" mechanism, for McCarthyite probes of newpeople and for expanded use of the Espionage Act are still unrealized, so the New Right's antimedia shock troops have had to rely on a variety of lesser weapons and hope those will have a cumulative effect.

Reed Irvine, for example, harasses the networks by enlisting his supporters in letter-writing campaigns to media corporate executives and advertisers. "AIM Report" has a circulation of about 30,000, and Irvine reaches thousands of others through his syndicated newspaper column and his five-day-a-week radio commentary, *Media Monitor*. He also buys shares in media corporations so he can attend stockholders meetings and introduce resolutions. In addition, AIM maintains an active speakers bureau and sponsors conferences.

In the past few years AIM has campaigned against television programs critical of Agent Orange, Nestle's infant formula, nuclear power, J. Edgar Hoover, Senator McCarthy, Anastasio Somoza and the present Guatemalan government. Other objects of its ire have included stories considered favorable to the Nicaraguan revolution, the nuclear freeze and Jane Fonda and her film *The China Syndrome* ("an anti-free enterprise movie"). CBS and its correspondents Mike Wallace, Dan Rather and Bill Moyers are frequent targets of Irvine's invective. In 1975 he wrote:

At least some of the blood shed by South Vietnamese when Saigon fell to Communist aggressors last April belongs on the hands of the Columbia Broadcast Corporation. CBS' biased news . . . proved influential in turning public sentiment against the war effort.

When that article was reprinted in Viguier's *Conservative Digest*, it was accompanied by a photograph of Walter Cronkite, with the caption: "Walter Cronkite and his fellow CBS newsmen deserve at least some of the blame for the fall of South Vietnam."

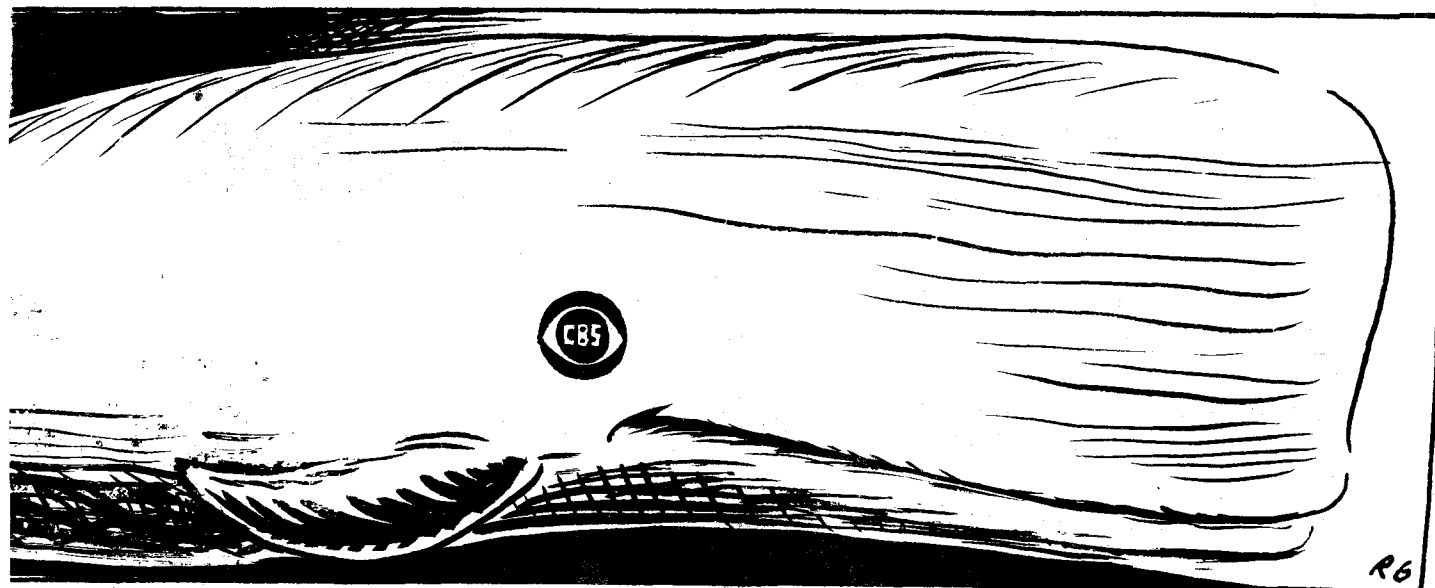
About a decade ago AIM and the American Security Council each began filing complaints against the networks with the Federal Communications Commission under the Fairness Doctrine, seeking license revocation or other sanc-

tions. They met with no success. The advent of the Reagan Administration and the appointment of conservatives to the F.C.C. raised their hopes. What followed, however, was a split between conservatives who genuinely wanted less government regulation, and so favored abolition of the Fairness Doctrine, and those, like Irvine, who tend to think in hard-boiled *Realpolitik* terms. After F.C.C. chair Mark Fowler rejected one of Irvine's petitions, Irvine wrote with obvious contempt that the conservatives on the F.C.C. were giving "the liberals who dominate the big electronic media just what they want. They seem to be doing this because they are ideological purists."

Another New Right organization, the American Legal Foundation (A.L.F.), established in 1980, has also been assiduously filing Fairness Doctrine complaints—including one against CBS for the documentary on Gen. William Westmoreland. Recently, when the C.I.A. filed its precedent-setting F.C.C. complaint against ABC *World News Tonight*, the A.L.F. offered a supporting petition. The A.L.F. describes itself as "the only pro-free enterprise, public interest law center in the nation that devotes all of its activities and resources solely toward fighting media bias."

Aside from posing threats to the licenses of the broadcasters, the F.C.C. complaints serve as a focus for anti-media publicity campaigns that may have an even more intimidating effect. The A.L.F. was part of such a campaign prior to the screening of ABC's film about nuclear war, *The Day After*. Later the A.L.F.'s general counsel, Michael P. McDonald, claimed, "If A.L.F. and other conservative organizations hadn't been involved in the whole *Day After* brouhaha, I don't think we would have seen the viewpoint segment that aired afterwards, which was a fairly conservative panel."

While continuing to file F.C.C. complaints, the foundation is also investing heavily in libel suits, and it has organized a Libel Prosecution Resource Center to aid "media victims." In a recent interview, McDonald said that he was disappointed about the outcome of the Westmoreland case but that his organization would continue to support libel prose-



DRAWINGS BY ROBERT GROSSMAN

cution against the media. "I think we'll be seeing some additional big cases," he said. "There are some pending right now." He mentioned Senator Paul Laxalt's libel suit against a California newspaper group.

Many in the New Right would like to see more suits by public officials against the media and regard the Supreme Court's 1964 decision in *New York Times v. Sullivan* as the principal impediment to that goal. In that decision the Court—to encourage vigorous debate on public issues—made it difficult for officials to win libel actions. In the past year the New Right has been sharpening its knives for *Sullivan*. McDonald has said: "We believe *New York Times v. Sullivan* destroyed 180 years of libel law. . . . The media is being afforded too much protection." Another opponent of *Sullivan* is Leslie Lenkowsky, who was staff director of the Smith Richardson Foundation when it helped fund the Westmoreland case. Interviewed before the trial began by Connie Bruck for *The American Lawyer*, Lenkowsky said he hoped the case would have two long-range effects: a change in the malice standard of *Sullivan* and the demise of CBS Reports, the division of CBS News responsible for the Westmoreland documentary.

The strongest attack on *Sullivan* came in three advertisements placed by Mobil in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and many other leading dailies. The ad that appeared on October 18, 1984, suggested that if the Supreme Court did not "redefine" the libel standard applied to public officials, such officials should be provided "government-financed" libel insurance that would pay for suits against critics. It also solicited contributions to assist the Westmoreland defense. Recently a number of those opposed to *Sullivan* joined forces to produce a monograph titled "*New York Times v. Sullivan*: An Obstacle to Enlightened Public Discourse and Government Responsiveness to the People." Written by Bruce E. Fein, a lawyer with the conservative American Enterprise Institute, it was published by the American Legal Foundation and has a preface by McDonald and an introduction by Herbert Schmetz, vice president for public affairs of Mobil.

The New Right's latest project against the media is the ploy of Senator Jesse Helms to gain control of CBS through stock purchases. In January a new organization called Fairness in Media, based in Raleigh, North Carolina, mailed nearly a million letters to conservatives throughout the country. The letter, which is signed by Helms, begins: "For years good Americans like you have asked President Reagan and me what can be done to combat the flagrant bias in the liberal news media. At last there's an answer to that question." The answer: recipients should vote the CBS stock they purchase or already own "to take control of that network . . . to elect a new Board of Directors . . . committed to ending liberal media bias." As evidence of CBS's offending policies, the letter cites a *TV Guide* study that found CBS "the most anti-Reagan network," a Bill Moyers program "that made it appear that President Reagan's policies were hurting the poor" and CBS News's misleading coverage of the Tet offensive. The letter implies that during the Vietnam War the media was Gen. Vo Nguyen

Giap's "greatest weapon in defeating America."

Although Helms is unlikely to gain control of CBS, he cannot be dismissed lightly. He has a huge following among the New Right rank and file and is said to have Presidential ambitions. During his twelve years in the Senate he has built a personal political empire, which includes six nonprofit educational foundations and a political action committee, the National Congressional Club, which is the largest in the country. When we called Fairness in Media headquarters, a spokesman told us the response to the mailing has been "tremendous." CBS lawyers have counterattacked with a lawsuit charging improper political activities by tax-exempt organizations. Meanwhile, since Helms's original announcement, the price of CBS stock has risen sharply.

Recently Ted Turner, chair of Cable News Network and Turner Broadcasting Systems, announced that he was seeking to buy CBS. For several years Turner, whose headquarters is in Atlanta, has made no secret of his desire to buy a network, but Wall Street observers do not believe he has sufficient funds, unless he has some big-money backers in the wings. Although a spokesman for Turner denied any connection with the Helms action, *The New York Times* reported, "Turner has met in recent weeks with representatives of Fairness in Media."

Turner's links with the New Right are not generally known. Last June the National Conservative Foundation, an offshoot of John T. (Terry) Dolan's National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), sponsored a conference in Washington on The Conservative Movement and the Media. It was a true gathering of the faithful, and speakers included Richard Viguerie, Representative Newt Gingrich, Reed Irvine and Dolan, a founder of the New Right. Dolan pondered the question "Why is the American media pro-Soviet?" and observed that there probably were "active Soviet agents" in American journalism. The keynote speaker in this select company was none other than the man who now seeks to buy CBS, Ted Turner. He told the audience that the networks are "the greatest enemies America ever had" and repeated a charge he had made on previous occasions—that broadcast executives are "guilty of treason."

On January 26, 1982, three days after the CBS documentary "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception" was shown, General Westmoreland appeared at a press conference at the Army-Navy Club near the Pentagon to denounce the network. Flanked by ex-C.I.A. officials, former diplomats and retired military officers, Westmoreland inveighed against the "notorious reporter, Mike Wallace," who had tried to prosecute him in "a star-chamber procedure with distorted, false and specious information, plain lies, derived by sinister deception." The accusations against him, he declared, constituted "a preposterous hoax and will not go unanswered."

Shortly afterward, Irvine, whom Westmoreland had contacted in advance of the broadcast, devoted his newsletter to a strident attack on CBS. Under the headline "CBS Should Fire Mike Wallace," Irvine wrote that the documentary was

a "disgraceful example of the atrocious journalism practiced" by CBS News. He suggested the motive behind it: "CBS is smarting under the charge that they and others in the media helped cause our defeat in Vietnam."

Soon, another stalwart of the right came galloping in hot pursuit of CBS. The May 29, 1982, issue of Walter Annenberg's *TV Guide* ran a highly unusual twelve-page cover story titled "Anatomy of a Smear: How CBS News Broke the Rules and 'Got' General Westmoreland." Using unedited transcripts of interviews that were leaked to *TV Guide* by a CBS Deep Throat, the magazine accused CBS News, producer George Crile and Mike Wallace of numerous serious violations of journalistic standards. The fact that Annenberg is a longtime right-winger and a close friend and supporter of Ronald Reagan made some members of the press skeptical about the magazine's objectivity. *Newsweek* questioned whether *TV Guide* was a suitably "neutral forum" for such an investigation, given Annenberg's conservative background and his declared opposition to "adversary journalism."

But at the time the *TV Guide* article appeared, CBS News had a new president, Van Gordon Sauter. Faced with the exposé, Sauter responded by announcing that he had commissioned an investigation of the documentary by network executive Burton Benjamin. The harshly critical "Benjamin Report" was released in summary form in July 1982 and stated that the makers of the documentary had committed mistakes in procedure and violations of CBS News guidelines—though both Benjamin and Sauter affirmed that they supported "the substance of the broadcast."

It is easy to understand why New Right ideologues would have thought the Westmoreland affair had all the makings of a perfect antimedia project—their most ambitious one to date. Thus some time before the fall of 1982 an individual named Richard Larry approached Washington attorney Dan Burt, president of the Capital Legal Foundation. Larry is a trusted agent of Richard Mellon Scaife, the great-grandson of the founder of the Mellon banking fortune and one of the principal moneybags of the New Right movement. If Burt would fight CBS on behalf of Westmoreland, Larry proposed, Scaife would help pay for the suit. That secret arrangement was not disclosed until after the suit ended. Burt has now revealed that Scaife contributed well over \$2 million to Capital Legal (more than 70 percent of the cost of the litigation), which suggests that the trial might more aptly be titled *Richard Mellon Scaife v. CBS*. (Other major backers were the Smith Richardson and the John M. Olin foundations.)

That little has been written about Scaife is not for lack of journalistic enterprise. He has come into his own only since the early 1970s and goes to great lengths to avoid publicity. The most useful elucidation of his political financing activities is an article in the *Columbia Journalism Review* by Karen Rothmyer, a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter who teaches at the Columbia School of Journalism. Based on public and private financial records, Rothmyer's 1981 story estimated that Scaife's charitable foundations already

had granted \$100 million and were continuing to contribute heavily to a variety of conservative, neoconservative and especially New Right organizations. (Both Accuracy in Media and *The Public Interest*, a magazine run by Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer, are funded in part by Scaife.) Moreover, Scaife has been particularly influential as a source of seed money for such organizations as the Committee for the Free World, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, the Institute for Contemporary Studies, the Media Institute and the Heritage Foundation. All this bespeaks a good deal of political sophistication.

Rothmyer was never able to discuss her findings with Scaife. Although she repeatedly requested an interview, he repeatedly refused. She finally cornered him at an exclusive club in Boston one evening and shot a question at him: "Mr. Scaife, could you explain why you give so much money to the New Right?" He responded, "You fucking Communist cunt, get out of here."

Scaife is also known to have provided seed money for the National Legal Center for the Public Interest and six affiliates, one of which was the Capital Legal Foundation. Other benefactors of this New Right legal network were the Coors and Fluor families, both closely identified with conservative causes. In 1977, when Capital Legal was incorporated, its board included Leslie Burgess, a vice president of the Fluor Corporation; Peter J. Fluor, president of Texas Crude and a major stockholder of Fluor; and associates of two leading conservative organizations, the American Enterprise Institute and the Media Institute.

In 1980 Dan Burt left a lucrative private law practice (he had an office in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, where Fluor Arabian has headquarters) to become president of the Capital Legal Foundation. That same year Scaife commissioned Michael Horowitz to study conservative public interest law firms. Horowitz concluded they were too stereotypically pro-business to capture the sympathy of many Americans. Burt may have followed this advice, or perhaps he had a natural affinity for playing the kind of role recommended by Horowitz. He severed the foundation's ties to the National Legal Center and publicly criticized his erstwhile counterparts. He began to tell interviewers that his firm practiced a new breed of public interest law. It was for the little guy rather than big business and was more libertarian than conservative. Nevertheless, his connections to the right do not appear to have suffered as a result of his apostasy. He developed a working relationship with Senators Paul Laxalt, Orrin Hatch and Edward Zorinsky; he was accorded the honor of a long interview in the John Birch Society's newsletter, "Review of the News"; and his big-business, New Right board of directors was virtually unchanged. Moreover, Capital Legal's budget tripled between 1980 and 1982, with much of the money still coming from Scaife.

In spite of—or perhaps because of—his independent stance, Burt and his foundation were chosen by Scaife to handle the Westmoreland suit. At a press conference attended by Burt on September 13, 1982, the general announced that on that day the Capital Legal Foundation had filed a \$120 million libel suit against CBS on his behalf.

Soon after, Reed Irvine solicited donations for a Westmoreland legal fund (he later said he did this at Burt's request). He also sent out a nationwide mailing of a letter signed by Westmoreland, blasting CBS and appealing for contributions to AIM. In addition, Irvine ran a three-quarter-page advertisement in *The Washington Times* for AIM and the Tyson book, with a photograph of Westmoreland in full military dress, captioned: "General Westmoreland wrote that 'Accuracy in Media did a fantastic job of exposing the dishonest smear job that CBS perpetrated. Everyone should read the AIM Report.'"

In late January 1983, CBS News president Sauter told a meeting of journalists in Philadelphia that the Westmoreland libel suit "has become a rallying point for people who seek to use it as an instrument for damaging the image, spirit and aggressiveness of the news media." Westmoreland, he added, "is merely the point man in their search-and-destroy mission." A CBS spokesman identified AIM and the American Legal Foundation as the "people" Sauter had had in mind.

Burt struck back sharply in the press, insisting that Capital Legal followed no particular political philosophy and that he had tried to distance himself from AIM and the American Legal Foundation. He was quoted as saying, "Sure, there are crazy groups on the right, but what can I do?" Irvine later reported in his newsletter that Burt had refused \$41,000 that AIM had raised for the suit, and commented bitterly: "He apparently decided that the case might in some way be jeopardized if Accuracy in Media was in any way connected with it. He said that he would not want to run the risk of being accused of carrying out an anti-media crusade." That the dispute was tactical, not substantive, however, is suggested by the fact that in May, Irvine could announce to his readers that AIM had received a new contribution of \$100,000 from Richard Mellon Scaife—the *éminence grise* of the Westmoreland case.

After AIM ran the ad with Westmoreland's picture a second time, Capital Legal released a letter the general had written Irvine. The letter disclaimed any animosity toward the press. "The ad, by implication, could give the reader the impression that my fight is with the media," Westmoreland wrote. "It is not! It is with CBS over a specific issue. Your ad adds fuel to the frequent allegations by some that my case is a right-wing effort to 'get' the press."

Forgotten by nearly everyone was that some years earlier the general had not hesitated to associate himself with AIM's criticisms of the media. In 1978 he had been the principal speaker at an AIM conference in Arlington, Virginia, that was also addressed by William Rusher and Patrick Buchanan. In a rambling but combative talk, Westmoreland did not go so far in his condemnation of the press as many in the New Right have, but he charged that journalists in Vietnam were "abusive, arrogant and hypocritical," that Americans had been "masterfully manipulated by Hanoi and Moscow" and that the public's "false perception" that Tet was a victory for the Communists was "directly attributable to inaccurate reporting." He declared, "If the media can create a defeat of our armies on the battlefield, they can

also eventually defeat the viability of our system."

As the trial date neared, Burt—despite one slip when he exclaimed, "We are about to see the dismantling of a major news network"—sounded more and more like a benign professor of journalistic ethics. He managed to focus the press on such matters as media responsibility and the right of an old man to preserve his reputation. Although a few stories made passing reference to Capital Legal's New Right funding, Burt largely succeeded in diverting attention from the motives of those who were paying Westmoreland's legal fees and the political significance of the case. Instead, the media turned on itself in a paroxysm of self-criticism. On the eve of the testimony of the first witness, *Newsweek* bore a picture of Westmoreland on its cover and a story inside with the headline "The Media in the Dock: Scrutiny of the making of a TV documentary highlights shortcomings throughout the news business."

But for Burt the party ended when the trial began.

To win his case, he had to prove that the documentary's statements about the general were false and were made with "malice"—that is, with knowledge they were false or with reckless disregard for the truth. George Crile, the producer of "The Uncounted Enemy," was one witness from whom Burt confidently expected he could extract testimony showing malice, but his examination of Crile was a disaster. Expected by some to become the scapegoat of the entire affair, Crile saved himself by coolly demonstrating that he was extraordinarily knowledgeable about the subject. He came across as a serious, well-informed journalist, who had done impressive research.

Burt's last chance to undermine Crile's testimony and prove malice was Ira Klein, a former CBS employee. Burt had stressed the importance of Klein's testimony to his case in his opening statement to the jury:

Crile fabricated his story with the help of a film editor. . . . [who] complained to Crile time and again about the way he was making the broadcast. . . . That film editor, Ira Klein, the man who physically made the broadcast, you will see testify at this trial as a witness for General Westmoreland. He will describe how Crile created "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception" with reckless disregard for the truth.

CBS attorney David Boies delivered the *coup de grâce* to Westmoreland's case when he cross-examined Klein. This was the man who had been airily giving his "expert" opinions on alleged distortions in the broadcast for the previous three years. First, Boies forced Klein to admit that he had told a reporter that Crile was a "social pervert" and was "devious and slimy" (tape recordings of those conversations were available). Then he proceeded:

Q.: During the preparation of the broadcast, did you attend any of the interviews of people that were being interviewed?

A.: No.

Q.: Were you aware that Mr. Crile and Mr. [Sam] Adams and others associated with the broadcast took notes of interviews that they conducted in preparation for the broadcast, interviews that were not filmed interviews?

A.: Not that I'm aware of.

Q.: During the preparation of the broadcast, did you ever read any Army or C.I.A. documents?

A.: Not that I can recall.

Q.: Did you ever review any order of battle documents?

A.: No.

Q.: There has been some testimony here about the Pike Committee. Were you aware during the preparation of the broadcast what the Pike Committee was?

A.: No.

By then, reporters in the courtroom were turning to one another incredulously. The questioning went on and on, accompanied by the refrain "No. . . . Not that I can recall," until Ira Klein finally stepped from the witness stand naked as a jaybird.

At that point, even before Boies began what would be a powerful "truth" defense, Burt already had lost. And as witness after witness confirmed the documentary's charges, culminating with the testimony of officers who had served with Westmoreland, the journalistic misdeeds uncovered with so much fanfare paled by comparison. However misguided, they clearly had been committed in the service of entertainment, not to distort the facts. The Westmoreland case revealed itself finally as a striking example of that politics that denies or invents reality.

Let us be charitable and grant that some of those in the New Right have boarded an express train whose destination they do not know. But most of the first-class passengers are cognizant of where they are headed. In his 1982 book, Kevin Phillips discusses fundamental alterations in our government that leave no doubt about the direction of his thinking. Although he calls his model state parliamentary, it in no way resembles a true parliamentary system, which emphasizes party responsibility. Instead, Congress would be reduced to an arm of an imperial Presidency, with Congressional leaders serving in the Cabinet and the two-party system merged into a single-party coalition. Also, the jurisdiction of the Federal courts would be cut back. All this, he assures us, could be accomplished without changing the Constitution. As for the media, presumably he still favors his earlier suggestion that it be regulated by the Federal government.

According to Senator East's legislative assistant Samuel Francis, the "best known characteristic" of the New Right is its rejection of "abstract universalism," with its emphasis on the "brotherhood of man" and "egalitarianism." Replacing these, the New Right will stress "a Domestic Ethic that centers on the family, the neighborhood and local community, the church, and the nation." A primary value will be "the duty of work," which may result in "a more harmonious relationship between employer and worker." His remarks remind one that in 1940, when the French Republic became the collaborationist Vichy dictatorship, its coins changed also, with "liberty, equality, fraternity" replaced by "work, family, country." The New Right

clearly feels far more comfortable with that triptych than with such "abstract universalism" as "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind" or "all men are created equal."

We should by no means regard the New Right movement with any sense of inevitability. Events are moving rapidly. In the next four years the New Right could field its own Presidential candidate—Helms, for example—in the Republican Party, or it could be a powerful third party movement. Or it may overreach itself, peak and decline. William Rusher has admitted, "Any development that revives and inflames the old division between haves and have-nots in the producing segment of the society could quickly disrupt the [New Right] coalition." With a blue-collar and lower-middle-class constituency, the New Right quails before class consciousness and conflict as vampires recoil from sunlight or a crucifix.

Meanwhile, right-wing harassment of the mass media will continue and, although greater journalistic accuracy is a blessing to be desired and strived for, neither accuracy, nor fairness, nor conciliation will end these attacks. Averting our eyes from what is happening will not make it go away. Above all, this is not the time for a failure of nerve. □

■ WESTY AND L.B.J.

Front Man for An Unpopular War

KEVIN BUCKLEY

In 1968 Gen. William Westmoreland was astonished and angered that the American people had been shocked by the Tet offensive, even though his rosy assessments of the progress of the war had helped cause that reaction. At his libel trial he was again surprised by the inevitable. He seemed taken aback when Maj. Gen. Joseph McChristian and Col. Gains Hawkins told the same devastating story in the courtroom that they had told to George Crile, producer of "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception." Westmoreland's behavior provided some of the most compelling evidence yet that the CBS documentary was wrong in saying he had tried to deceive the President of the United States. The idea that this limited man could have put anything over on Lyndon Johnson defies common sense.

To understand Westmoreland's relationship with civilians, and especially with President Johnson, it is vital to remember how important public relations (a.k.a. lies) were during the war. I recall a conversation I had in 1968 with William Colby, then a Deputy Ambassador to Saigon in charge of "pacification."

"Yes, we are making progress," Colby said. "But we have always made progress here, right from the beginning."

Kevin Buckley, recently the editor of GEO, was Newsweek's Saigon bureau chief from 1968 to 1972.

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The trouble over the years has been that sometimes the enemy made more progress, and faster, than we did." Colby was not trying to be funny. Dr. Pangloss was the patron saint of the official U.S. establishment in Vietnam, civilian and military.

The best evidence that Westmoreland was only a prop in a P.R. extravaganza orchestrated by the White House can be found in *A Soldier Reports*, his memoirs, published nine years ago. It is an extraordinary book, and the man who emerges from its pages is remarkably like the person seen recently in New York City's Foley Square. Alternately apocalyptic and petulant, humorless and self-pitying, he is obsessed with his reputation and frets ceaselessly about direct or implied attacks on it. Apart from press coverage, the thing that irked him most during the war was his relationship with civilian policy-makers. Westmoreland himself provides abundant evidence that he was a stooge, yet characteristically tries to avoid facing that obvious and painful conclusion.

Westmoreland did not like his civilian bosses. Of McGeorge Bundy he writes, "Perhaps, like numbers of civilians in positions of some governmental authority, once he smelled a little gunpowder he developed a field marshal psychosis." Five pages later he huffs, "Over-all control of the military is one thing; shackling professional military men with restrictions in professional matters imposed by civilians who lack military understanding is another." Further on, he fires a broadside at State Department meddlers:

Would I, a military man, presume to tell a team of surgeons how to operate? What special audacity prompted civilian bureaucrats to deem they knew better how to run a military campaign than did military professionals? Is no special knowledge or experience needed?

Throughout the time Westmoreland was in Vietnam (from January 1964 to June 1968) he was as loyal and supportive of official policy as any President could have desired. When antiwar demonstrations in the United States increased, he attacked the protesters. The despised civilians in the government must have been gratified to realize the general had a useful gift that he was probably not even aware of. It was a seemingly superhuman talent for putting an optimistic gloss on the most appalling news and to rationalize virtually any defeat into triumph.

When President Johnson and General Westmoreland conferred in Honolulu in February 1966, Johnson feared a repetition of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's challenge to civilian authority in Korea, and cautioned, "I hope you don't pull a MacArthur on me." Westmoreland recalls, "Since I had no intention of crossing him in any way, I chose to make no response."

Johnson had no cause for that worry. Westmoreland and MacArthur might as well have been from different planets. Westmoreland considered resigning only once, in February 1968, over a breathtakingly petty interservice rivalry concerning who should command the Army and Marine Corps aircraft. The incident showed the enormity of military ego and the ferocity of service pride.

When Westmoreland and his wife, Kitsy, visited the L.B.J. ranch in August 1966, Johnson lavished hospitality on them. In his book, Westmoreland remembers their conversations as "cordial but hardly substantive," and says he was baffled about Johnson's intentions. He might have got a hint after the Johnsons and the Westmorelands worshipped together: "The press met us at the church and again upon our return to the ranch, whereupon we departed from the ranch airstrip as the Johnsons waved good-bye."

Two months later, in Manila, at a conference of civilian and military commanders of countries fighting in Vietnam (known as the Free World forces), Johnson flattered Westmoreland again. The general writes:

When I expressed surprise at the absence of General Wheeler and Admiral Sharp, the President confided that he intentionally wanted me to occupy the center of the stage as the senior military officer at the conference. I saw that as a kind display of confidence. Had he called me to his ranch to get to know me better in anticipation of that move?

The appeals to Westmoreland's vanity softened the rather startling outcome of the Manila meeting. He was surprised when the countries participating issued a communiqué in which they promised to pull out their troops not later than six months after North Vietnam withdrew its forces from the South, stopped its infiltration and thus reduced the level of violence. "Nobody consulted me on that," Westmoreland writes.

The day after that meeting, when Johnson visited Cam Ranh Bay and the two men reviewed the troops together (the scene provided the opening footage for "The Uncounted Enemy"), the only conspiracy going on was aimed at flattering and protecting, not deceiving, the President. "I told him that 'no Commander in Chief in our history has ever had finer troops than these.' I spoke with infinite conviction and sincerity and was pleased that he later publicly quoted my remark."

In private, Westmoreland advocated a reserve call-up and more troops to launch ground operations against North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In public, he accused war protesters of "unpatriotic acts" and performed effectively for Johnson in a speech to Congress in April 1967. But when Westmoreland came to the United States in July 1967 for his mother's funeral, Johnson told him there would be no reserve call-up, no ground operations across the borders and fewer troops than he had requested. The general was extremely disappointed:

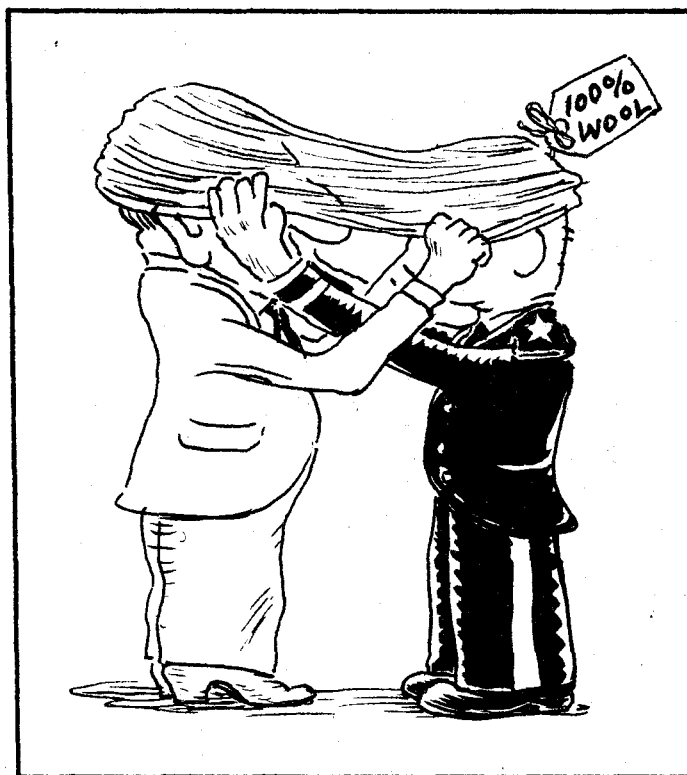
I knew that failure to provide major troop augmentation would extend the time required to do the job. Yet I understood the pressures weighing on the President. . . . When the President at a news conference the next day noted that "we have reached a meeting of the minds" and that the numbers to be sent were "acceptable" to me, I agreed; but I made clear to him privately that I reserved the right to request more troops.

Four months later, Johnson summoned Westmoreland home, "ostensibly for further consultations, but in reality for public relations purposes." Johnson invited the Westmorelands to stay in the White House and allowed them to

invite five couples—Army pals and their wives—for dinner in his private quarters. The next morning the general, dressed in his bathrobe, joined the President for breakfast. "While the President ate in bed, I sat at his bedside and ate from a tray," he writes. As aides came and went and telephones rang, "somehow we found an opening here and there for conversation." Later on, Westmoreland went to an Army football game. He notes parenthetically, "In the process I missed a White House meeting with the President and ambassadors Bunker and Komer, which nobody had told me about." Nine weeks later both men woke up to the Tet offensive.

Even if the Westmoreland libel case fades from public awareness, chances are the issue of the proper relationship between civilians and the military it raised will remain important in the calculations of this generation of military leaders and their civilian policy-making counterparts in Washington. Soldiers and civilians alike must ponder the disturbing legacies of both Douglas MacArthur and William Westmoreland, especially if the United States becomes involved in another controversial war. Then, the process of selecting (or "casting") a troop commander will have to produce an individual with little or no resemblance to his, or her, predecessors in Korea and Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the dynamics of military-civilian rivalry remain largely unexplored. One is left to speculate about the significance of the relative pessimism about a *contra* victory in Nicaragua expressed by Gen. Paul Gorman when he stepped down from his position as head of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama: "I don't think overthrow [of the government] is feasible in the near future." And one can only guess at what "contingency plans" his successor, Gen. John Galvin, has been authorized to prepare. □



■ NICARAGUA UNDER SIEGE

The Rollback of The Revolution

NANCY NUSSER

Managua

The drive into the capital is over a potholed highway past crumbling, broken buildings, ragged vacant lots, a new shantytown of war refugees and urban poor; past a sign that reads, "We Are Three Million Constructing the Future." The slogan proclaims that the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979 placed the rebuilding of Nicaragua in the hands of the people. But in the last two years, rather than making progress, the Sandinista revolution has been rolled back.

Buildings deteriorate, streets and bridges go unrepaired. Shortages of staple goods are chronic. Long lines at the gasoline pumps are a frequent occurrence. The economic crisis and the *contra* war have drained the country of money and human energy, and some of the government's most celebrated programs have lost ground.

Shortly after they took power, the Sandinistas announced they would attain economic self-sufficiency and social and economic equity through land reform and a system of free or inexpensive health care and education. By 1982 they could claim some important successes. The literacy campaign taught some 400,000 Nicaraguans to read and write. The government built thousands of medical centers and schools and began development projects like the Momotombo geothermal energy plant and the Timal Sugar Factory.

But after four years of war and growing economic distress, those and other gains have been undermined. "It's possible that literacy rates have decreased since the original campaign," a researcher at a progovernment Managua study center told me. She said that adult education classes have been halted in some war zones and that programs throughout the country have been cut back under a government austerity plan promulgated in January. According to a Sandinista report published in December, *contra* attacks have forced the closing of 840 adult-education collectives and 354 schools and have destroyed another nineteen schools. In 1984, 113 teachers were killed and 187 were kidnapped by rebels.

The campaign against malaria, which promised to eradicate the disease from the countryside, is slowing down, says Richard Garfield of Columbia University's School of Public Health, who has done a study of conditions there. In 1983, he said, malaria rates in the war zones rose above the previous ten-year average; before the fighting intensified they had dropped sharply below it. He says he expects the rates to go up further next year if the war continues. At a conference in Managua last fall, Nicaraguan health workers and U.S. physicians reported that the major health prob-

lems created by the war included mental illness and a shortage of medicines for civilians. Some twenty professional health workers and forty health-care *brigadistas* have been killed, and about sixty centers have been either destroyed or closed because of *contra* attacks.

The country's foreign exchange crisis has worsened. Last year Nicaragua earned approximately \$400 million from exports, about half of what it spent on imports and only a fraction of its \$3.9 billion foreign debt. (As of 1983—the most recent year for which the World Bank has figures—the country had managed to pay only \$3 million of the \$1 billion it owes to commercial lenders.) About 40 percent of the 1985 budget has been earmarked for defense. Between the shortage of foreign exchange and the bulge in defense spending, Nicaragua has no money for anything but the bare essentials.

The government's austerity program, considered by foreign observers to be a step toward more pragmatic policies, was prompted by looming economic collapse. The measures, which the Sandinistas had long resisted, included devaluing the cordoba and ending subsidized prices for staples. The plan allows wage increases, but they are not expected to compensate for price hikes of between 90 and 100 percent for basic foods like eggs, milk and meat.

Even before the austerity program was announced, imports of consumer goods had slowed to a trickle. Batteries, light bulbs, automobile parts and a score of other items were available only on the black market at inflated prices. Plans to clean up Lake Managua, which is polluted by mercury, have been put off indefinitely. One of Managua's most beautiful buildings, the Rubén Darío Theater, named after the country's most famous poet, has been open only sporadically for more than two years because its air-conditioning system broke down and spare parts are unavailable. The shortages and the decline in the quality of life have lowered morale in the capital. "I get a sense that everyone is depressed," a doctor told me.

Although U.S. sanctions, like the 90 percent reduction in imports of Nicaraguan sugar, have hurt, some of the nation's problems can be blamed on the policies of the Sandinistas' nine-man directorate. Even the government's supporters admit that the price controls it imposed have reduced incentives for companies to produce more goods. "The main problem is the bureaucracy," says Paul Rice, an American economist at a Managua research center. He cited the delay in planting the corn crop last year while farmers waited several weeks for credits from the central bank. In a speech in December, Commandant Henry Ruiz admitted that the leadership had made mistakes: "We Sandinistas recognize with honesty, without beating around the bush, . . . that public administration and the exercise of power, because they are new and complex for us, have not been our strong point."

Some of Nicaragua's problems resulted from the hard-line approach the Sandinistas took after the revolution. A 1979 Sandinista Front document discusses the need to develop a "vanguard party" that would lead the masses to revolution. It spoke of the necessity for eventually

Nancy Nusser is a freelance journalist living in Managua.

"crushing" the enemies of the revolution among "the betrayer bourgeoisie, the ultra-leftists and the residue of Somocismo." In a 1981 speech, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega said the source of the party's strength is "Sandinismo" and "our doctrine is Marxist-Leninism."

Now, confronted by the disastrous results of some of their dogmatic policies, the Sandinistas appear to have modified their ideology in terms of concrete policies, while retaining their rhetoric. Pressure from the United States, the international community and, to a lesser degree, the domestic opposition have contributed to this loosening up.

"The laws that determine the development of a society are not imposed by the desires of one organization," a leader of the antigovernment party observed recently. "Aside from what the Sandinistas may have wanted, the reality is that there is an opposition here."

Specifically, the government has reduced its confiscation of private property, which had caused capital flight. It has largely abandoned its heavy-handed policies toward the Miskito Indians and started negotiations with the aim of giving them greater autonomy. It has backed off from efforts to create a progovernment "popular church," which had been a focal point of the tensions between the Sandinistas and the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy.

Nicaragua has not had time to catch its breath between catastrophes. The 1972 earthquake left 8,000 people dead and destroyed more than half of Managua. Fifty thousand people died in the revolution, and several towns, including Managua, Masaya and Esteli, were damaged by bombing. In 1981, floods destroyed much of the crop. Before the country could recuperate from those disasters it faced a new enemy: the United States. Supported by U.S. funds, the *contras* have, in four years, escalated a series of border skirmishes into a war that is being fought in half the country. Last year more than 12,000 of Nicaragua's 3 million people were conscripted into local militias, and despite widespread protests, the government plans to draft 20,000 this year.

Nicaragua is limping through the sixth year of its revolution. There can be no stability until the war ends, yet neither a quick victory over the *contras* nor an easy solution to the economic crisis is in the cards. Faced with deteriorating conditions, the Nicaraguan people have lost their enthusiasm for the "revolutionary process." Their discontent has not been translated into support for the *contras* or calls for U.S. intervention, however. Many Nicaraguans complain bitterly about the government's blunders, but few say they would prefer to have the *contras* running things. ☐

COMING UP

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Fighting the Darkness

RICHARD ELMAN

WITH WALKER IN NICARAGUA:
And Other Early Poems, 1949-1954.
By Ernesto Cardenal. Translated by
Jonathan Cohen. Wesleyan University
Press. 111 pp. \$18. Paper \$8.95.

Nicaragua has rightly been called a nation of poets. Not only has it produced important modern innovators of Spanish poetry such as Rubén Darío, Salomón de la Selva, Alfonso Cortés, the "exteriorist" José Coronel Urtecho and the Rev. Ernesto Cardenal, along with so many others, but poetic expression in Nicaragua has always been an important part of personal expression and cultural aspirations. The country's major newspapers have traditionally printed a lot of poetry, both good and bad, in their daily editions and weekend supplements, and at one time it was customary for Nicaraguans to compose sentimental ballads as part of their courtship rituals. (The earliest pre-ecclesiastical poems of Cardenal, not included in *With Walker in Nicaragua*, are passionate and sophisticated examples of this tradition.) In the new Nicaragua, though, the poetry of sentimental yearning has been largely displaced by poems that have emerged from the literacy workshops created by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Cardenal's Ministry of Culture. These poems often mix romantic love with descriptions of the common tasks of service to the revolution: "You looking after the wounded in the Ministry of Health/and me in the line of fire."

If Nicaraguans have begun to sound a little tendentious in their official poetry, in conversation their language is still inventive and still relies heavily on metaphor and pun. A heavy exchange of rifle and automatic fire is often referred to by saying, "*Hace mucha lluvia*," ("It's raining hard"). With intimates Nicaraguans shorten "brother" as "hand" ("*hermano*"/"*mano*"); they measure

time in diminutives and use numerous multisyllabic indigenous nouns: "*cocoroca*," a bird, and "*kupia-kumi*," being in love. The common speech takes pleasure in many purely poetic strategies, but events often have the habit of brutalizing language. Almost all Nicaraguan poets feel threatened by forces beyond poetry. The U.S.-inspired *contra* war against their country undermines absolutist assumptions about free speech and is responsible for the abridgment of other freedoms as well. "The present agony lacks beauty," a poet told me recently.

Whatever their difficulties, Nicaraguans expect poetry and poets to play a public role. Before the revolution most Nicaraguan poets set themselves apart from the Somoza dictatorship. It was a young poet from León, Rigoberto Lopez Perez, who assassinated Somoza I at a banquet in his native city; and Cardenal's good friend Leonel Rugama, perhaps the most gifted literary figure of his generation, perished in another conspiracy against the dictatorship. The years of the Somoza dynasty produced anonymous broadsides by major figures, including Cardenal, as well as small clear poems that read like curses from the grave. Some poets of that period were so appalled by the Somocista spectacle that they responded with a poetry of inchoate obscenities. Ernesto Mejía Sánchez depicted the chief of state as "an antediluvian beast," feeding off the bodily fluids of priests. Much later, Mario Cajina-Vega wrote of "the muse that thunders," revolution.

Many Nicaraguan poets were early members of the Sandinista National Liberation Front or other insurgent groups. The poet Tomás Borge, now Minister of the Interior, joined the underground movement early and spent many years in prison, as did President Daniel Ortega, who has composed some crude, powerful poems about his brutal experiences. The same is true of Jaime Wheelock who, though a poet, serves as Minister of Agriculture. These men became the heroes of the revolution. But there were also conspiracies against the dictatorship from different literary factions, such as the one led by the influential poet Pablo Antonio Cuadra,

who edits *La Prensa*. Cuadra has become an open critic of the present government, and it is his international prestige, as well as his history as an opponent of Somocism, that allows him to function, with somewhat limited freedom. Another Nicaraguan poet of my acquaintance, whose works are only occasionally represented in Sandinista anthologies, was imprisoned by Somoza more than once, tortured and scarred. Yet his works are of little interest to the revolution. Like many such poets, he is tolerated but not encouraged.

Ideological orthodoxy has a long arm in Nicaragua. There are clear if unspoken rules of printability. There is a correct way to address the Miskito problem and the problem of food shortages, should they occur. When a riot breaks out in Monimbó in which government troops kill Indians, official errors may be acknowledged, but not with indignant poems. Poetry expressing orthodox opinions may be published in *Ventana*, the literary supplement of the rabble-rousing *Barricada*, which is a party paper, and in the somewhat more sophisticated progovernment daily *Nuevo Diario*, which is said to be subsidized under the table by Borge. *Nuevo Diario* prints an influential poetry column edited by poet Michelle Najlis, who was formerly a government censor. Most progovernment people make light of the censorship, describing it as a justifiable response to lies, libel and breaches of security. But when I asked Borge two years ago about what sort of poems he was writing, he told me, sarcastically, that he was hoping to write one about a law he wished passed "to keep the birds from singing in the morning" and waking him up.

In a very early poem by Cardenal, not included in *With Walker in Nicaragua*, there is a charming conventional ballad extolling the virtues of civic life in Costa Rica: "In San José the windows and balconies/are filled with pretty flowers and girls/and they do turnabouts in the park./The President goes on foot in San José." This poem was written in the 1950s, before Cardenal had visited Fidel Castro's Cuba, and perhaps it is not now included with these early poems because the poet, who corresponded regularly with translator Jonathan Cohen, no longer thinks it worthy of his craft. It is also the case that it is

Richard Elman is a poet and novelist who has traveled widely in Central America since 1978. He wishes to thank Gene McGarr for his help in making the writing of this piece possible.

ideologically out of line. The Nicaraguan revolution pointedly disapproves of Costa Rica's status as a U.S. satrap. In general, Nicaraguans now write about Costa Rica with a mixture of pity and contempt. Cardenal is a celebrity who doesn't choose to be an exception.

Censorship is not entirely a matter of whim. The Sandinistas are acutely conscious of the propaganda war they're fighting with the leviathan to the north. They may feel free to tell you as a friend that the President "blusters" too much, but in print a positive attitude toward events since the revolution is the paramount consideration. A poet who enjoyed the desultory freedoms of a walk in Costa Rica is, in effect, supporting friends of the enemy. A poet who depicts himself as "old" and therefore lacking a homeland in the new Nicaragua would surely be making his work dispensable. Although publication is theoretically possible in the private sector, it's not very likely, as the state rations paper and other materials in a fairly politicized manner. The presses of the cultural workers' unions are not inclined to express divergent points of view, though they made an exception during the recent election, when *Barri-cada* gave a great deal of space, in its international edition, to parties who opposed the Sandinistas.

At the same time it's no real contradiction to point out that some fine writing has been published by the party's presses. The most important revolutionary memoir, for example, *Fire from the Mountain*, soon to be published in translation here, is the work of Omar Cabezas, a former Sandinista street *muchacho* who has become a *comandante*. Cabezas's human and unpretentious account of his early Sandinista days, which won a Casa de las Americas prize, is written in an argot that's vivid and persuasive. Cabezas is a loyal Sandinista. The editors who publish him are not always able to see the brilliance of writers who are the government's critics.

It is fair to say that much of the poetry being published in Nicaragua compares unfavorably with poems written during the censorship of the Somoza regime, and probably for the same reason that, as has often been noted, Milton wrote much more vividly about Hell than about Paradise. In addition, Nicaragua's cultural resources, including its poets, are engaged in giving a voice to

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the unschooled. Established poets such as Cardenal conduct literacy workshops and print magazines containing the work of hitherto voiceless men and women. These are poets of all ages, and their products are usually much less interesting than the process of production. In many of the workshop poems (which usually have modernist North American models, such as William Carlos Williams's free verse), service to the revolution is the cause of star-crossed or otherwise unrequited love, which it somehow makes bearable. Thus Carlos Galan Pena of the Police Complex Workshop sincerely advises his loved one, Lily, that he wishes they could be together but:

you and I are the Revolution
and I am filled with my work
and you spend hours and hours
... in the office of propaganda.

In another such poem, Isidoro Tercero laments that, though moved, he is not able to write a poem to the sister of a comrade because of his work in State Security.

In general, Nicaraguan art aims for "massification" (reaching the largest possible audience). A leading Nicaraguan filmmaker recently wrote in *Barricada Internacional*: "The only [esthetic] that interests us is one that reflects an ongoing commitment to the Revolution's values and the people who are forging it." This parallels the point of view of Ernesto Cardenal in his position as Minister of Culture. Cardenal's recent "Canto nacional," for example, attempts to be part of the revolution and to span the chasm between life and art. Looking like one of Pound's cantos, it even adopts Pound's international bankers as the gringo *barracudas* and *pistoleros* who at the beginning of this century made usurious loans to Nicaragua which still debilitate the country's economy. A truly modernist poem, it is also very much an official work, mixing Marxist Sandinista critique with strange, exhilarating onomatopoeic effects.

But the Cardenal of most interest to me is the poet of the late 1950s and early 1960s, whose work is represented in *With Walker in Nicaragua*, translated with great accuracy, simplicity and beauty by Jonathan Cohen. Cardenal's poetry of this period is exteriorist (documentary) and not so oracular as his Indian poems or his poems about Managua's earthquake. These early works are more available to us because

of their subject: the penetration of the isthmus of Nicaragua by a succession of barely well-meaning and not-so-well-meaning imperialists from the United States, chiefly during the nineteenth century. The subject was a natural for Cardenal. When young, he studied at Columbia University, was close to New York City's Upper West Side intelligentsia and, later, coming under the influence of Thomas Merton, resided in the Trappist monastery at Gethsemani. Cardenal was deeply influenced by Pound, Williams, Whitman, Marianne Moore and Muriel Rukeyser, whose free-verse styles he used to alter the more arty approach to exteriorism characteristic of Urtecho. His interest in the theme of the gringo in a strange land may also have been occasioned by more immediate identifications. During the nineteenth century, Cardenal's family had assimilated some European immigrants, including, legend has it, a defector from the William Walker expedition which sought to make Nicaragua a vassal state of the slave-holding Southern Confederacy. In choosing to write intimate accounts of these filibusters and versify passages from Ephraim George Squier's nineteenth-century treatise on Nicaragua, Cardenal—like Quentin Compson in *Absalom, Absalom*—was coming to terms with his own history:

the ones who were hanged from trees
and left swinging
beneath the stinking black vultures
and the moon
or sprawled on the plain with a lone
coyote and the moon,
their rifle beside them;
or in the hot, cobbled streets filled
with shouts,
or white like shells on the seashore
where the tides are always covering
and uncovering them.
The ones who survived all those
dangers and are even still alive.
The ones who stayed there afterwards
to get married
and to live in peace in that land
(“With Walker in Nicaragua”)

“With Walker in Nicaragua” is narrated by a survivor, in a voice still awed by the jungle, the deaths, the tropics, the wonder of a land, a people. It is a report on a time when the land was unsullied, the air clear and the imperialists either bloody-minded or awestruck. The poem is tender toward the invaders without being sentimental. It presents us with their terror, their pain, their ordeal. It is these filibusters who were

culturally deprived until they came to Nicaragua, where they were astonished by relatively simple beauties:

And in León the nights were cool
with distant guitars below wrought-
iron balconies
and the wind swinging the golden
lamps in front of the houses.

(“With Walker in Nicaragua”)

When Cardenal's early poems are not about the contact between gringos and indigenous Nicaraguans, they are amatory and sometimes political. They were often printed anonymously, like certain poems composed for underground revolutionary handbooks. His single greatest historical poem about gringoism, a patriotic epic of sorts, is “Zero Hour,” which treats of the assassination of Sandino. It's a poem of heroic evocation in which the death of a hero is also seen as the rebirth of nationhood: when the hero dies, green herbs rise where he has fallen. It makes innovative use of English and Spanglais and is therefore hard to translate, but from its opening lines about “*noches tropicales*” through to its conclusion, it is very much a work of national consciousness and a unique poetic expression.

There are hardly any poems in this collection about Nicaraguan poverty; both Cardenal's middle-class origin and his historical perspective permit him to avoid describing the squalid cardboard shacks and 6-year-old laborers in the Tipitapa cotton fields of Abram Gorn, Somoza's crony. Cardenal's religious community on the island of Solentiname in Lake Nicaragua existed within peasant society and had peasants among its artists and contemplatives, but there is nothing in Cardenal's work that resembles the moving social realism of the Honduran poet Roberto Sosa, a great and original artist, who sees the children of the poor as having the “faces of indignant gods.”

After “Zero Hour,” Cardenal's poetry became increasingly pious, almost doctrinaire, but very often effective as such. He is now so closely identified with the interests of the Sandinistas that he has been willing to allow the party to instruct him in his duties, and he complains often about his lack of time for poetry. His service as a kind of international ambassador does not always show him at his best. After chatting up the Ayatollah Khomeini, for example, he wrote enthusiastic nonsense in *Barricada* about ecclesiastics and politics, at a time when the Imam was sending

prostitutes to the firing squad.

To put the matter only this way, though, is not to allow Cardenal's fine work to speak to us as it can and should. Publication of *With Walker in Nicaragua* in English provides us with examples of some of the best poetry of a modern master:

The green, moss-covered sloth
little by little climbing from branch to
branch, with its eyes closed as if
asleep but eating
a leaf, stretching out one front claw
followed by the other,
not bothered at all by the ants biting
it,
slowly turning its round funny-
looking
face, first to one side
and then the other,
finally wrapping its tail around a
branch
and hanging down heavily like
a ball of lead.

("Squier in Nicaragua")

Cardenal imitates the sounds of birds and evokes the growth of erotic feeling in the gringo traveler. He can be such a superb poet that his occasional wordiness and heavy-handedness is all the more unforgivable, and Cohen's translations are so close that they make you aware of the poet's occasional faults as well as his virtues.

A considerable rivalry has always existed among the established poets of Nicaragua, whether they were courting the favor of some wealthy patron or the Sandinista state. Poets who have not joined the Sandinista movement are summarily dismissed as "old-fashioned" by those in favor. In response, the poetry of the President's wife and head of the cultural workers' unions, Rosario Murillo, was described for me by one of her poetic rivals as being "hard to digest, like a *carne asado* [pot roast]." The greatest envy is directed against the international reputation of Cardenal, of whom it is now sometimes said: "What a pity. He publishes so much he doesn't even have the time to write."

Cardenal's dedication to the literacy workshops is both esthetic and political. He's seeking, however faultily, to make Marxism and modernism cohere in his own work and in that of his peers and students. The students in the workshops try to give us this fusion. *Campeño* Juan Ramón Falcon depicts a surrealist Managua landscape of old beer cans and copies of American consumerist magazines which seems similar in spe-

cific ways to the landscape in Cardenal's "Managua: 6:30 PM," with its "primitive" barbarism. Where Cardenal records darkness falling suddenly on a city lit by the logos of the giant international corporations ("TACA BUNGE KLM SINGER"), Falcon literally memorializes the old regime as a garbage heap on which the romantic images of beauty queens and Corn Flakes boxes are bestowed.

In dealing with the Sandinista present, it is sometimes harder for the workshop poets to take liberties. José Antonio Roderigues of the Estelí Poetry Workshop recalls to his "guerrillera" sweetheart, Eufemia: "I kissed you on the mouth/and you told me you wished to be a guerrillera of the F.S.L.N. . . . / I don't know where you are now Eufemia." Many such workshop poems are touched with a sense of real loss, of sorrow, and they share with the works of those for whom poetry is a calling in Nicaragua a sense of grievance against the old regime and its sponsors in Washington. When Cardenal's magazine, *Poesía Libre*, translates Marianne Moore's poem "Poetry" ("I, too, dis-

like it"), it does so to make a case for individual expression as part of a world movement, which also includes the workshop poetry placed alongside the essay. The workshops have a certain unanimity: if they do not always speak in one voice, they are in agreement about Nicaragua's case against the imperialist world and about a social movement that is larger than individual poems.

For nearly one hundred years Nicaragua has been making its case before this world, in part through poetry: Dario's open letters were truly addressed to the exploiters to the north; Sandino's published utterances were surely as much poetry as politics. When Cardenal writes of his postrevolutionary hopes in "Lucas," he makes a stronger case than the windy diplomacy of Daniel Ortega:

We feel their warm bodies, that also
came from the sun,
that are also light.

This revolution is fighting the
darkness.

It was daybreak on July 18th. And the
beginning
of all that was about to come. □

Nicaraguan Shadows

JAMES POLK

TO BURY OUR FATHERS: A Novel of Nicaragua. By Sergio Ramírez. Translated by Nick Caistor. Readers International. 253 pp. \$14.95.

In a stunning scene from the film *The Night of the Shooting Stars*, an Italian villager pleads for the life of his son. He's only 15, the father protests, kill me instead. But the terrified young Black Shirt is executed anyway by a group of the very townspeople he himself once terrified. Upon hearing the shots, the father falls to his knees, jerks his body around in an agonized circle, seizes a rifle and, placing the barrel in his mouth, pulls the trigger.

To Bury Our Fathers, also circular, ritualistic and intensely cinematic, is a complex novel about the violence and loss that have long shadowed the lives of similar villagers in Nicaragua. It is a tale of memories in turbulent times, and

James Polk writes frequently about Latin American literature.

its guiding metaphor is contained in an epigraph from Aristophanes:

The skylark was born before all beings
and before the earth itself. Its father
died of illness when the earth did not
yet exist. He remained unburied for
five days, until the skylark, ingenious
of necessity, buried its father in its
own head.

If the Freudian implications are obvious, Ramírez is also suggesting that it is one of the functions of revolution to provide a landless population with a place to inter its dead.

The novel focuses on four Nicaraguans of varied backgrounds—Indio Larios, Turco Taleno, Jilguero Rosales, and Catalino Lopez—all burdened by the figurative weight of unburied fathers and caught up in the years of struggle that preceded the Sandinista revolution. They are brought together in a plot constructed of six alternating and interlaced narratives, which are recounted with a breathtaking and sometimes irritating disregard for chronology.

The story opens in 1957, shortly after

the assassination of the first Anastasio Somoza, and then moves back to 1932, when American advisers called the military shots. The action is punctuated by an account of the four characters' grotesque reunion in a broken-

down whorehouse outside Guatemala City.

Occasionally the time travel is tiresome and the narrative intricacies too ambitious, and the whole structure is weighed down with too much tech-

nique. Eventually, however, the confusion of plot and counterplot is resolved and the book takes on clarity and considerable power. What emerges is an ironic, unromantic, occasionally haunting portrait of the brutalizing effects of civil war and of the very particular tragedy of Nicaragua.

For Indio, later a hero of the revolution, coming to terms with history means answering for his part in the 1934 murder of Augusto César Sandino. Turco deserts the National Guard because he dislikes the prospect of following his father as a toady to *el hombre*, the country's unnamed president. Jilguero rebels in response to his family's ruin at the hands of *el hombre*. Indio's son Bolivar—the only character who does manage to bury his father—solves the problem of his past by throwing old letters from the window of a speeding truck.

On the other side of the political fence, Col. Catalino Lopez, the president's most trusted aide, devotes much of his career to exorcising his own demons. Everywhere, there are ancient, shameful defeats—disgrace at the hands of rebel forces, a humiliating debt to Indio, the loss of the family's land and the memory of the failed father who first drove the colonel into the arms of *el hombre*, his spiritual parent.

Memory sustains and destroys. Turco recalls a honky-tonk childhood and a night as a caged beast in the president's private zoo. Indio memorializes himself and his cause in grandiose, unmailed letters to his son while he tries to forget his youthful awkwardness at a social encounter with the daughters of U.S. marines. Jilguero remembers his grandfather, elected president but denied office, who went mad and spent his twilight years addressing inaugural speeches to a shrinking audience in the market square.

Such recollections fuel the narrative, giving it shape, direction and substance. Memories are put on display, turned over and examined with the deliberate patience of a dowager contemplating her jewelry. They are valuable, these pasts, all that remains to bury.

This fiction, unheroic and filled with ambivalence as it is, comes to us from an unexpected author: Sergio Ramírez Mercado is the Vice President of Nicaragua and a man whose revolutionary credentials are well known. A member of the rebellious "Autonomy Genera-

PENTECOSTAL VOICE

Alone as an undergraduate, I thought of the sun
pushing shadows down the emptied street today
like its own thoughts: no negotiable meaning,

it's Shavuot (Pentecost), a holiday that announces
light speaks for itself. Why am I here, then
(that old, immigrant's question) inside, listening

to my heart grow quiet, as if in another room
watching this hand moving—and then, imagined—
moving like a turret, prepared to kill

appearances: the small white stork of paper
pinned beneath blue ball . . . Outside,
in stereo, the guitar talks back

to its singer, who "couldn't care less about
anybody's happiness," a blues, as I go deeper
grow into the dark inside, safari

to the wound's origin, to the fight
against appearances: take this tank
I must ride in—to be Jewish in Israel—

less accommodating, even less warm than Talmud
to the divided mind. Take this hand
lit by an inner engine that can't even heat

this room much less give this picture life.
Rigid in our poses, breathe in,
friend, and feel the light commanding it, pose

with your hand in the wind of mine—
I can't be here alone, drink light's
cup of coffee without you—and yet

I expected less, not being saved by this picture
and not Bob Dylan's still divided voice
again, now in his forties, "Fixin' to Die,"

a Son House, restored in blood.
Ain't no heaven
no, ain't no burnin' hell

where I'm going when I die
can't nobody tell
—not this light beyond me

again, creating shadows
the need to fight them, ask: what
do I *feel* about them?—what do *you*?

Not beauty but the *weight* was unexpected:
of these tanks with sons inside
of you not feeling this

of even one inconceivable idea
the unspeaking globe
of sun.

David Rosenberg

tion" of university students in the late 1950s, a founding editor of the leftist literary journal *Ventana* and for several years an expatriate, in the late 1970s he became one of the "Group of Twelve," intellectual supporters of the Sandinista movement. He also built a reputation as a writer of fiction whose work often contained subtle yet biting satires of North American influences on Nicaraguan life. Yet despite this radical past, *To Bury Our Fathers*—which was completed in 1975 and in its present form is the first novel by a Nicaraguan ever to appear in English—is not a polemic, an apology or a social realist tract but a multidimensional and carefully realized work of fiction.

On the shelf of literary works about Central American revolutionary movements, Ramírez's book serves as an introduction to accounts of more recent events: Antonio Skármeta's *The Insurrection*, Manlio Argueta's *One Day of Life* and the memoir of guerrilla life by Sandinista Omar Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, which will soon be published here. By moving back into history Ramírez allows us a glimpse of the early antagonisms and passions that still rule the region. *To Bury Our Fathers* should be required reading for any who claim a thorough understanding of Nicaragua's revolution and its turbulent aftermath. □

FILMS.

ANDREW KOPKIND

Memories of Underdevelopment Up To A Certain Point

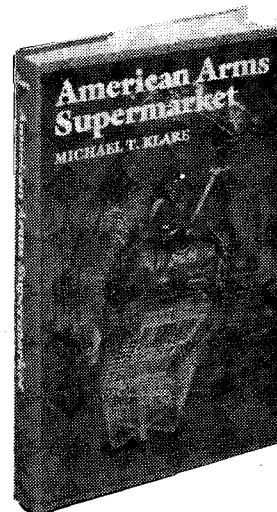
There were six showings of *Memories of Underdevelopment*, the classic chronicle of bourgeois alienation in revolutionary Cuba, over two days of a warm March weekend at the Film Forum, the art-and-politics movie house in Lower Manhattan. This was not a rare event, and yet the theater was packed for all performances. Since it was made (in 1968) and brought to the United States (in 1973, after a disconcerting tug of war with customs officials), Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's film has been staple fare for radical repertory and revolutionary retrospectives from Cambridge to Santa Cruz, and it is hard to imagine that anyone old enough to recognize the face of Che on a poster and honest

enough to admit a romantic loyalty to Cuba does not have a functional acquaintance with it. "I haven't seen it *personally*," a friend who works in the Salvadoran support movement confessed before the early show on Sunday evening; "but I feel I *know* it." The persistence of *Memories* in the consciousness of a political generation is like the permanence of a sacred text in the culture of a sect. Its references, allusions and themes are the currency of communication, and even its fleeting images linger as icons of ideology and identity. I have heard people say that they feel like Alea's young girl dragged through a gallery of abstract art by her older intellectual lover, and I have caught myself watching distant scenes of struggle like his alienated hero gazing through an apartment window as the Cuban army prepares to defend the revolution—their revolution, *his* revolution?—in the morning of the missile crisis. The crowds that saw the movie that weekend at the Film Forum went to take part in a ritual that told them who they were or what they had been, which is not only a wonderful way to spend an hour in the dark but almost redeems the whole painful, extravagant and self-indulgent process of movie making.

Alea was right on the button in 1968, when bourgeois existence bumped into revolutionary history around the world on campus, *rue* and rice paddy; when style and substance clashed in every corner of culture; when radical movies arrived every week (it seemed) like the latest manifesto or political pamphlet. It is not entirely his fault, then, that his newest film, *Up To A Certain Point* (*Hasta Cierta Punto*), widely misses the mark. The subject now is *machismo*, conceived dialectically as both the sensibility and the system that imposes the Hispanic male ego on Cuban society. But however much *machismo* may be a problem for Cubans, they are not exactly on the cutting edge of analysis, action or struggle in its regard. Alea's insights seem superficial: *machismo* oppresses men as well as women. His Marxism sounds—dare I say it?—vulgar: social history has conditioned individual behavior. His cinematic methods have not progressed much beyond the inventions of *Memories of Underdevelopment*: moody close-ups, intimate conversations followed by alienated pans, *vérité* interviews and newsreel footage intercut with dramatically staged

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scenes, flashbacks and flash-fantasies, moments of outrageous sentimentality cheek-by-jowl with passages of abstract philosophy. They were fresh and provocative when Alea first used them; now they have the look of leftover Godard mixed with bits of Third World Newsreel as influenced by Miami television.

The genre is tired, too: a filmmaker is caught in the act of making a film, double-crossed by his subject, defeated by his best intentions. Oscar (Oscar Alvarez) is a descendant of the desperate hero of *Memories*. He has more or less resolved his alienation with a successful career as a playwright and filmmaker, although his position vis-à-vis the Cuban revolution is still elitist, observant and intellectual. In other words, he has found a comfortable bourgeois niche and lives well within its confines. Oscar and a colleague are making a movie about *machismo*, and as research, they set about to interview real people who work or hang out around the docks, where *machismo* is thought to be most dramatic. We know the subjects are real because they are black, female and uncultured—everything the filmmakers are not.

Oscar quickly fixes on Lina (Mirta Ibarra), a particularly attractive, articulate and available dockworker, as the central character of his film and, of course, the object of his extramarital affections. But although her story is meant to be the focus of the (unmade) movie-within-the-movie, it is Oscar's tale that is very much the point of *Up To A Certain Point*. Oh, the agony of a sensitive man who does not recognize his own *machismo*! Oscar tries to maintain his marriage to a particularly unappealing actress and at the same time stay in the sack with his liberated dockworker, all to no avail. At the end he loses out and cops out of both relationships, in a way that recalls the final scene of *Memories of Underdevelopment* but with less hope or meaning. In the earlier film, the hero sees the troops mass and the guns gird for struggle. Oscar simply stares at a jet leaving Havana and at gulls fluttering in the tropical sky.

I'm harder on this movie than I would be on a piece of expensive drivel out of Hollywood because Alea is a serious and important filmmaker, a careful critic of Cuban politics and culture and a revolutionary. His articles and letters about the ongoing struggle against the oppression of homosexuals, women and intellectuals are useful cor-

rectives to the opportunistic campaign in Europe and America which uses those issues as an excuse for Cuba-bashing. *Up To A Certain Point* seems to fail in many ways, but that is a judgment made from a North American perspective. In fact, we bear some responsibility for the political isolation of Cuba from such discourse as still takes place on the Western left. American and European radicals of the New Left had a salubrious effect on Cuban policies toward women and gays; the favor was returned as Cuba gave Northern movements the sense and meaning of Third World liberation. And not only policies and programs were touched: Cuban films, literature and art in the 1960s were infused with an international radical spirit. The decay of our radical tradition and the turn of its attention to inward concerns has left Cuban artists and intellectuals without access to an alternative, progressive Western culture. No wonder Alea seems stuck in the past. We've seen *An Unmarried Woman*, we've been in the sexual battles, we've watched the planes leave and the gulls fly. Alea's dated discovery of these events doesn't work for us, but it may have a far greater impact in its own setting, where the point is not yet well taken. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Kandinsky in Paris: 1934-1944

The Guggenheim Museum's final installment of a three-stage biographically motivated exhibition of the work of Vasily Kandinsky will be on display through April 14. It is greatly to the museum's credit that it should memorialize in this manner an artist so closely linked with its own historical identity. "Piety," Santayana said, "is loyalty to the sources of our being." There is also a particular justice in giving the entire museum over to only the last decade in Kandinsky's life, as this is at once his least familiar period and the one least appreciated and understood.

The horizons of Kandinsky's life during this decade, spent in a Paris drained of light first by war and then by the German occupation, were scarcely wider than the walls of his studio, which he filled with compensatory colors. And

though he managed a muted participation in the activities of a quiescent art world, he was for the most part on his own. Drawn in on himself as he was, it is hardly surprising that the sense conveyed by Kandinsky's paintings is that of a look into a private world populated by tiny beings of indeterminate biology. He was creating a world of his own in these last years rather than seeking to transform the larger world, as he had in his earlier periods, first in Munich and then in Dessau and Weimar. The overwhelming impression provoked by the exhibition, which requires that we measure it against the circumstances of his life, is that of a great artist who has entered his *Altestil*, the expression used by art historians to designate the late style of painters who have grown old without growing dry or weak.

Kandinsky was a vigorous painter to the end, and there is an endearing jauntiness, an almost jazzy cadence, in the syncopated deployment of biomorphic forms. These forms, laterally related to shapes in Miró and Arp and, above all, in Klee, who had been Kandinsky's close friend and colleague in their Bauhaus days, were to become matrices for the decorative motifs of *art moderne*. It is all the more important, therefore, that we see them as the distillations of a lifetime, the emblems chosen by a man determined to show that whatever the critics and collectors might think, there was plenty of dance left. It is almost as though the minuscule organisms carry the promise of growth and exuberance, however reduced their world.

"Each for Himself," painted in April 1934, only a few months after his arrival in Paris, is dominated by nine forms in a three-by-three array, each having the shape of a living cell, or perhaps an amniotic sac, and each containing some energized and vital creature as its nucleus. The suggestion of isolation and potentiality could not be more elegantly achieved. Each of these creatures, swimming in different colored fluids, represents a distinct artistic possibility: each could generate a different species of form. It is a wonderfully optimistic image.

What one wants in the *Altestil* of a serious artist is continuity and synthesis, the final harmonious conjunction of the strands of a life. We do not expect a radically new style since that would be a repudiation, an effort, as it were, to proclaim a spurious youth. Nor do we

want repetitions of what went before, which would imply a falling away of creativity. By these criteria it would be difficult to find a more fulfilling coda than that furnished by the paintings and watercolors of this show. They incorporate and transform what preceded them, and they point to a future, if there is to be a future.

In Kandinsky's first phase, marked, of course, by the discovery of abstract or nonobjective painting, the forms are typically organic, even if they lack a precise biological identity. They refer us, if not to birds and insects or to winged creatures generally, then to the *idea* of flying matter. These early paintings radiate the optimism of a man who has entered a new life—Kandinsky was 30, with a degree in law and a future in academia, when he moved, abruptly, to Munich to become an artist—one who has been the first to set foot in an unexplored world of artistic possibilities. The composition is centrifugal, as though some explosive force were driving everything outward, past the frame. Kandinsky's time in Munich was one of visionary and utopian hope; art was to be the agency of spiritual transformation and moral rebirth. The early paintings condense all these moving and extravagant affirmations, and the brush work is appropriately expressionistic and impulsive. It is hardly astonishing that Kandinsky's admirers should have especially prized these great canvases and, as if to remind us of this, there is a singularly tasteless invitation from Alfred Barr on display, offering Kandinsky passage to America. One can almost feel Barr rubbing his hands together as he cautions Kandinsky to be sure to bring all his early canvases with him. Nor is it surprising that Kandinsky should have returned to these forms in his older age.

Work from the middle period (1915 to 1933), done first in Russia and then in Germany, is deeply geometrical and rather hard. It reflects a different situation from that in which the Munich enthusiast found himself: geometry emblemizes the spirit of construction and reconstruction, first for the revolutionized society seeking a new social architecture, then for the institutional framework of a school designed for designers. Today it is difficult to appreciate the degree to which geometry carried a spiritual meaning among the Russian avant-garde in the early twentieth century. The fourth dimension

obsessed those artistic consciousnesses concerned, as Kandinsky's was, with art's role in the evolution of humanity toward a new level of moral being. The fourth dimension seemed to offer, quite literally, an utterly new space for a new order of beings who had left the material impediments of the routine three-dimensional world behind.

I stress this spiritual aspect of the fourth dimension because even at his most geometrical, Kandinsky was never a formalist, nor would he have been

pleased with a formalist esthetic which would address his works as so many exercises in abstract design. But geometry communicates a different approach toward the means of spiritual progress than the organic forms did. The lines and angles, curves and intersections and sharp colors of the painting of the middle phase of his life define a style of undiminished affirmation. Inevitably, the expressionisms of the early work yield to a surface and treatment that might almost be perceived as austere but

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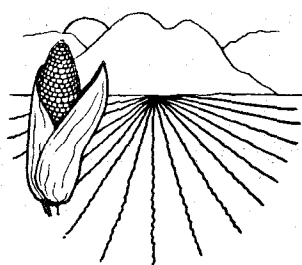
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for the playfulness of arrangement, the witty internal references of form to form and the bannerlike boisterousness of the color.

The Bauhaus was closed by the Nazis in April 1933, and in late December of that year the Kandinskys were in the Parisian suburb Neuilly-sur-Seine, where the artist was to spend his remaining years. The world closed in, driving the forms back into the frames: there is little evidence left of that outward energy of bursting life. The organisms are submerged, as within the confining walls of an aquarium, and swim in highly geometrized spaces. The surfaces, colors, outlines and textures come from the middle period; the forms, from the early period, at least for the most part.

Vivian Endicott Barnett has written a fascinating essay for the catalogue on Kandinsky and science, in which she identifies illustrations from various encyclopedias and textbooks Kandinsky may be presumed to have seen, which may have inspired the forms he reinvented and made his own. I find her ascriptions convincing and clever, but of course Kandinsky's elegant plankton, his amoeboid and paramerial entities, do not refer to their graphic origins, nor are the paintings interestingly analogous to scientific plates. The sporty insects romp with refugees from the geometric period—dots and spots and showers of angular confetti—and their microscopic universes are also populated by what might be toys and ornaments for peasant bazaars. The final period brings together, as it ideally should, components from the earlier periods, but the optimism now is subdued and rather private.

For all their nonobjectivity, the canvases are deeply pictorial. The urge toward flatness, which was the mark of a late stage of modernism, is not present here. The forms are as much located in illusory space as are the figures shown by Guardi in some Venetian piazza. It remains the traditional pictorial space of Western art. To be sure, there is little occasion for perspective when worlds, like drops of liquid, are enlarged through the lenses of a microscope.

It is possible to see Kandinsky battling with illusionism by making it difficult to identify where objects are in spatial relation to one another. Typically, forms do not occlude one another, there is no fading off of hue as in aerial

perspective, there are none of the gradients of distal perception. So the space could be read as shallow and abstract. I prefer a different reading, and see a different order of statement being made.

The objects are isolated one from another, do not even, as in "Sky Blue" of 1940, make contact at their peripheries. Each floats in its own space, and the total space is a conjunction of independent beings. In that painting there are dots and worms, kites and coelenterates, birds and rocking horses, a bug with a clown's head, each vibrating in the same blue primordial soup, and each as gaily tinted as a Russian Easter egg. (What a marvelous excursion the show offers for those seeking an appropriate secular activity on Easter Sunday!) Alone among the alone, the forms make no concession to the metaphoric grays a more depressed spirit might have used to mark the condition of growing old in a world growing dark. What could be a better expression of an old man certain of his powers but aware of the external limits imposed by the world without?

I find the work deeper than all that came before because I find it braver, less foolish, finally more realistic. In discharging its institutional obligations, the Guggenheim has mounted an inspiring show, transformed our perception of an artist too easily taken for granted and, beyond that, provided a treat for the eyes. ☐

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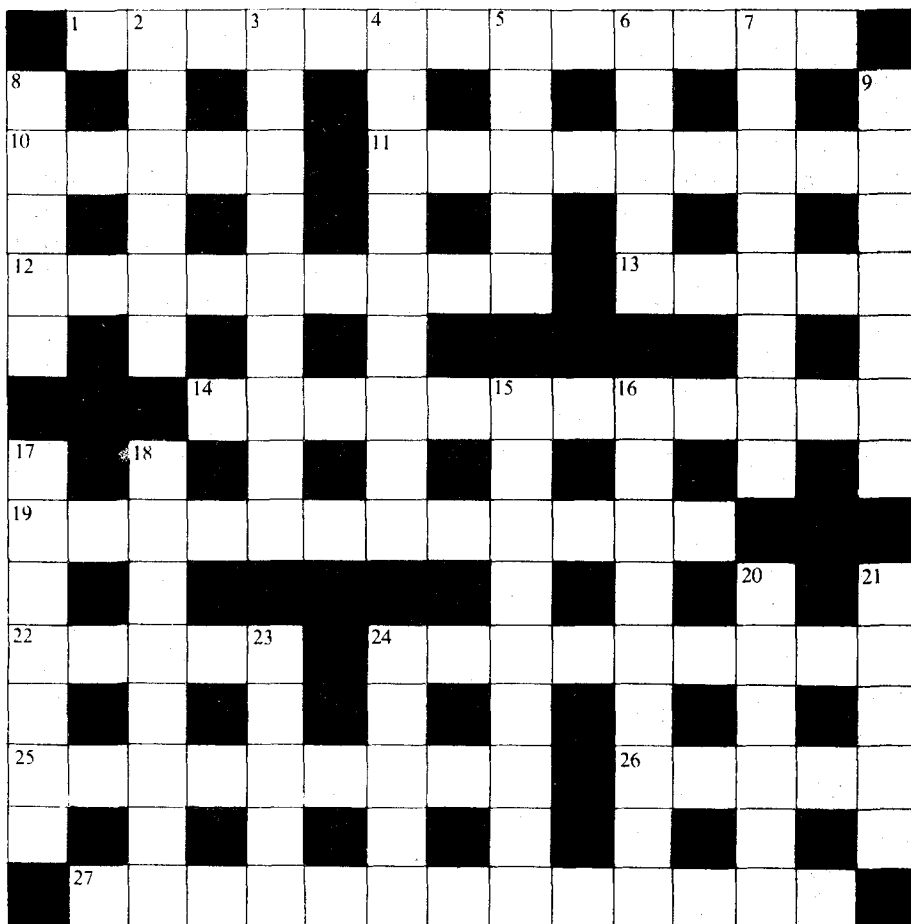
SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2048

A	D	R	U	N	K	E	N	S	A	I	L	O	R
F	H	E	A	T	I	N	B	F					
T	R	O	U	S	E	R	A	N	N	U	L	A	R
E	M	T	S	B	E	I	E						
R	E	B	E	L	S	A	L	L	R	I	G	H	T
N	U	I	P	E									
O	S	U	N	B	E	A	M		E	N	D	O	W
O		G	N	A	X								
N	E	C	K	S		T	I	T	R	A	T	E	A
A		A		E	C	L							
W	E	D	O	W	I	T	H	S	T	E	E	R	S
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T	R	A	N	S	C	E	N	D	E	N	T	A	L



Crossword Puzzle No. 2049

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 Con Philip Sidney's girlfriend with some difficulty into being more than a star. (It carried weight with the Air Force.) (13)
- 10 Obviously not a party held inside to top all others! (5)
- 11 Meet one that keeps track of the smallest type! (9)
- 12 Skit night, possibly, showing how some of the chorus like their leotards. (4-5)
- 13 Greek letter that "E" displaced? Not exactly! (5)
- 14 One whose boy was blue wins the election district, it seems. (12)
- 19 What they sold during WWI proves chains are attached even to freedom. (7,5)
- 22 Patrols part of it, but nothing has too much around it, in France. (5)
- 24 Part of a ranch, or a gentleman's place in the northern state. (9)
- 25 Weapons for dervishes, perhaps. (9)
- 26 It's only something we heard, but it sounds like one that might stay with you! (5)
- 27 The broken meter is, with a religious holiday around. (It might be marked "paid.") (13)

DOWN

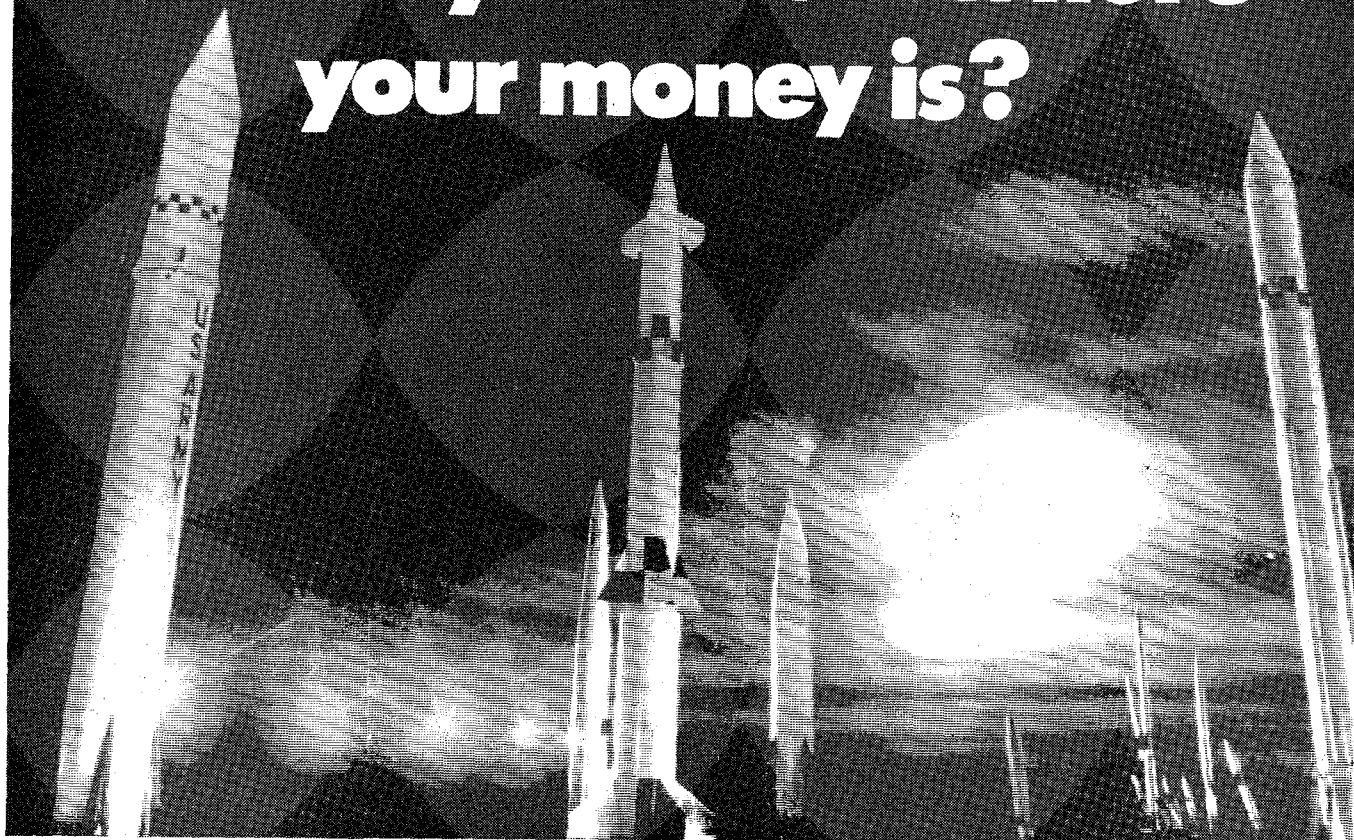
- 2 Where in France you get to 6 down or get the better of someone? (6)
- 3 A crew might qualify as such. (Bob used to!) (5,4)
- 4 It originally meant a coming up, possibly calling for quick action. (9)

- 5 This is permitted, but is commonly drunk with more than a hundred inside. (5)
- 6 Make gibes at a sort of square relative? (5)
- 7 An escapee might be, and find none hurt bad! (2,3,3)
- 8 Go without power next to the sea? (5)
- 9 Beat her badly, and you'll have to take in air. (7)
- 15 Classic detective stories, or where you put them? (9)
- 16 Something with a message might be set to carry a little weight. (9)
- 17 The debate is over with this, but it has quite a bit to make better around it. (7)
- 18 The sailor figured out how to get pardoned, evidently. (8)
- 20 Robin's friend takes care of a British officer, perhaps... (6)
- 21 ... while Robin's men were so like this, reputedly. (5)
- 23 It has to beat the seeds of certain leguminous plants! (5)
- 24 You can get on the *qui vive* later, perhaps! (5)

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